

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

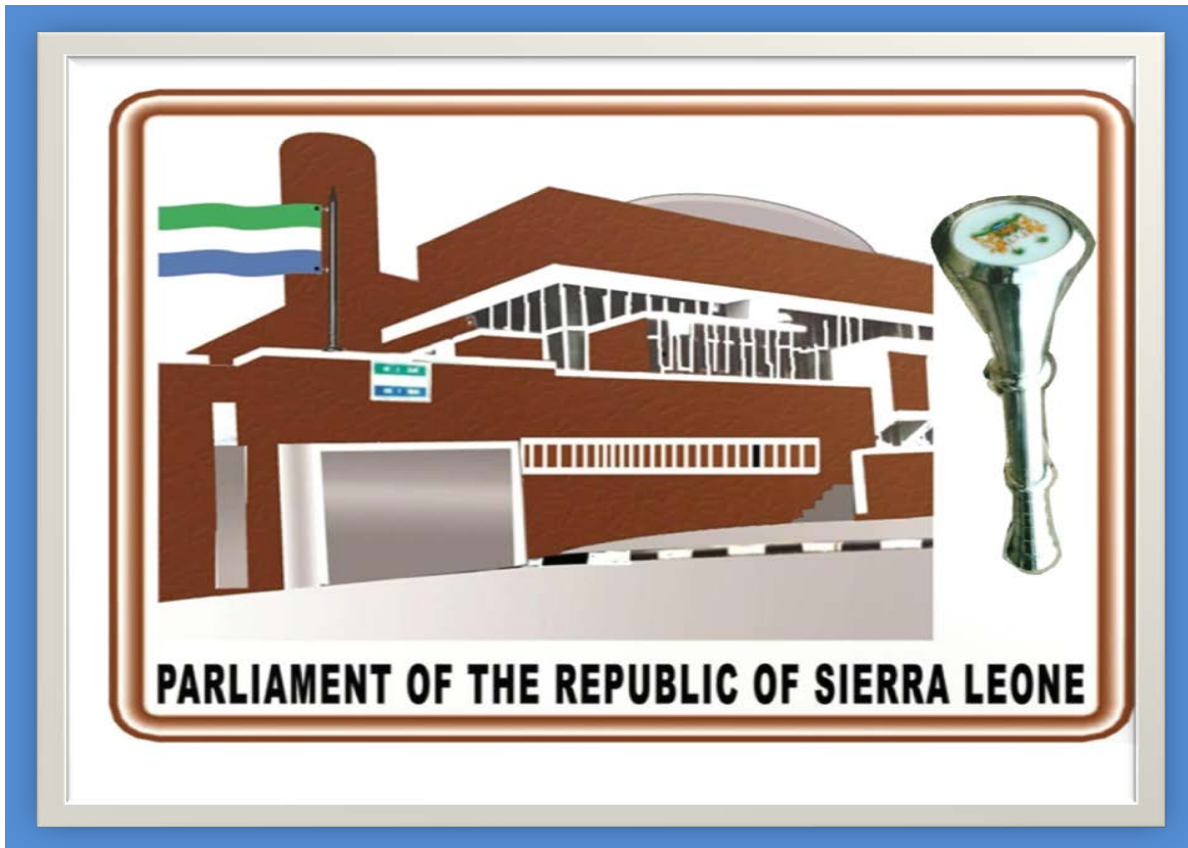
(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION-SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 25TH MARCH, 2014

SESSION – 2013/2014



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(HANSARD)

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Tuesday, 25th March, 2014.

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 25th March, 2014.

The House met at 10:08 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 B.B. Dumbuya, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

HON. SONGOWA BUNDU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that S.O 5(2) be suspended so that the business of the House may commence.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. AMADU KANU: I so second Mr Speaker.

(Question proposed, put and agreed to)

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR TUESDAY, 4TH AND TUESDAY, 18TH MARCH, 2014

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we have two versions of Votes and Proceedings with different dates as read out by the Table Clerk. I hope everybody is in possession of the two copies. We now go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 4th March, 2014. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Mr Clerk, I think there is a mis-numbering here. After Page 3, I have Page 6. Let us continue. Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7?. There being no amendment, can somebody move for the adoption of the Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 4th March, 2014?

HON. MABINTY K. SILLAH: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(The record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 4th March, 2014 was unanimously adopted as presented)

THE SPEAKER: We go to the record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 18th March, 2014. Page 1? Page 2?

HON. SHEKU SANNOH: Mr Speaker, Page 2, item 65

THE SPEAKER: Yes Honourable Member. Your surname should be Sannoh and not Sankoh. Mr Clerk, Please have that corrected. Page 3?

HON. PATRICK FOYAH: Mr Speaker, I was absent with excuse.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please take note. Page 4? Page 5? Page 6?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, Page 6, Roman VII.

THE SPEAKER: What is your observation Honourable Member?

HON. CLAUDE D.M. KAMANDA: It should be Section 119 (4 and 5), and not 4 sub-section 5.

THE SPEAKER: 119(4 and 5) of the Sierra Leone Constitution. Mr Clerk, please take note of that. Page 7? There being no further amendments, can somebody move that the record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 18th March, 2014 be adopted as amended?

HON. DAVID JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, I so move

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Mr Speaker, I so second.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question proposed, put and agreed to)

(The record of Votes and proceedings for Tuesday, 18th March, 2014 was unanimously adopted as amended)

III. ANNOUNCEMENT OF A SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE, PURSUANT TO SUB-SECTION 4 OF SECTION 93 OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE, ACT NO.6 OF 1991, IN TANDEM WITH STANDING ORDER (SO) 71 TO INVESTIGATE OR INQUIRE INTO THE ACTIVITIES OF VARIOUS CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs, NGOs, CBOs, NSA ETC.) THAT HAVE IMPLEMENTED PROGRAMMES FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF SIERRA LEONE THAT WERE FINANCED THROUGH PUBLIC

FUNDS AS SET OUT IN SECTION 111(1) (C) OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE ACT, NO.6 OF 1991.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, what has been read out just now is item III on the Order Paper. But before that, I think the Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business would like to make a statement precedent to this.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU (Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business): Thank you very much Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to preface this announcement with a short background. Let me take Honourable Members to the history.

(a) Historical Background of NGOs/CSOs

The presence of NGOs/CSOs dates back to the 1960s, when religious groups provided assistance to promote various development activities at parish and community levels, with active participation of members of the parish/community. This was accompanied by few International NGOs in the early 1970s, working on development activities at district and national levels, with hired staff.

By mid 1980s, the presence and role of NGOs as active agents of development became normal and increased rapidly; extending from small scale agriculture, food production and infra-structure development to issues of governance, human rights, and accountability. The civil conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s led to the unprecedented influx of International NGOs and the proliferation of National NGOs to respond to the humanitarian and emergency relief situations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, the number of NGOs is in the hundreds; and their presence could be observed in every corner of this country; and their activities now cover every area and aspect of economic, social, political and cultural spheres. In other words, the expansion in numbers from tens to hundreds, and in activities from the traditional sphere of development to every aspect of community, local and national

economic, political, social and cultural life has been phenomenal, especially in the decade from 1990 to 2000.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in addition to the (perceived) lack of capacity of national institutions to respond to the consequences of the civil conflicts, these developments are also closely tied to the tendency of donor agencies to channel resources to their homes. NGOs' based on the view that government institutions were also corrupt, a perception that persisted strongly till mid-2000. Hence, with the expansion in numbers and activities emerged, the gradual transfer of huge volumes of financial resources, mainly to International NGOs and the concomitant visibility and influence enabling them to determine some of the key areas of national development. That is, the NGO sector has evolved from small-scale aid and relief agencies to a multi-million dollar industry in Sierra Leone with immense influence and visibility.

(b) Calls for NGO Responsibility and Accountability

With greater visibility and influence comes responsibility or with a higher profile, comes louder calls for greater responsibility and accountability. In consequence, concerns about the role, responsibility and accountability of NGOs have been voiced out from different quarters since mid-1980s. As their influence increased with the volume of resources they manage, some donors, governments, corporations and international agencies continue to raise important questions about the effectiveness of NGO work and the legitimacy of their advocacy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it should be noted that the call from donor governments and agencies came, especially in response to demands from their citizens and tax payers to justify whether they use their resources effectively and efficiently, and whether they yield positive results. That is, to give account for their management of tax payers' monies, and whether they give "value for money".

In fact, the United Nations has also recognised the need for NGO accountability, as indicated in the "Development Dossiers" published by the "UN Non-Governmental

Liaison Service” in 2006. Similarly, Heads of 11 of the world’s leading International NGOs endorsed the first “Global Accountability Charter” in 2006. This Charter sets out values and operating principles relating to organisational governance, management, fundraising and multi-stake holder engagement.

(c) The need for Parliamentary Oversight and NGOs Accountability.

The above indicates that our call for NGO accountability conforms with international best practice in the area of NGO relationship with Governments (at national and local levels) and with community members as key stake holders. If the call for NGO accountability by donor governments and their agencies and citizens is now a normal practice and a condition for funding, it is simply equally normal that recipient countries and communities on whose behalf such funds are solicited and expended also demand such accountability.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one may want to ask, who is better placed to play the leading role in this process in terms of holding NGOs/CSOs accountable than the elected representatives of the people at both national and local levels? The constitutional basis for such a role by Parliament is unquestionable. Secondly, the 2009 “Revised Non-Governmental Organisations Policy Regulations” of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development provides the necessary instrument to kick-start the process. This process, once initiated, could unmask areas of deficiencies, duplications and lack of clarity that prevent the complementarity and harmonious relationship with government, citizens, members of communities and other stake-holders.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it could further spur NGOs to undertake initiatives for better efficiency that could lead to maximum benefits for the people of Sierra Leone. This could also lead in turn to putting in place a more robust policy and performance criteria that could result in positive development outcomes. This initiative has no intention to undermine NGOs/CSOs in the execution of their useful and largely accepted role in development, including holding government and business accountable for their actions. This initiative is simply a justified demand for Democratic Accountability that

requires us to monitor with equal energy the activities of those in the NGO sector, a necessity that has for long been ignored.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are firmly convinced that in this process lies the seeds for the reinforcement of NGO/CSOs' roles in helping to shape democratic participatory social, economic and political development. Thank you very much for your attention.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am sure all of you have heard the background information given by the Majority Leader of the House who is also the Leader of Government Business as a preface to the announcement of the membership of the committee that is going to be set up as a result of this. It is now my duty to announce the membership of the committee.

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE THE ACTIVITIES OF NGOS

1. Hon. Claude D.M Kamanda - Chairman;
2. Hon. Leonard S. Fofanah - Member;
3. Hon. Rosaline J. Smith - Member;
4. Hon. Helen Kuyembeh - Member;
5. Hon. Dr Foday Sumah - Member;
6. Hon. Dr Thomas Mark Turay - Member;
7. Hon. Komba Eric Koedoyoma - Member;
8. Hon. Veronica K. Sesay - Member; and
9. Hon. P.C Joseph Alie Kavura Kongomoh II - Member.

These are the Honourable Members that comprise the membership of the said Committee. The office of the Clerk would prepare a Terms of Reference (TOR) that would serve as a guide for members of this Committee. Honourable Members, these are the names to constitute the Committee to investigate the activities of NGOs in this country.

(Question proposed, put and agreed to)

*(Membership of the committee to investigate the activities of NGOs was
Unanimously accepted)*

IV. THE GOVERNOR, BANK OF SIERRA LEONE BRIEFING OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON REGULATION OF FOREIGN CURRENCY NOTES WITHDRAWALS FROM COMMERCIAL BANKS BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF SIERRA LEONE, IN COMMITTEE ROOM NO. 1 IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE SITTING OF PARLIAMENT

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I want to tell you that the Governor cannot come into the Chamber. That has been the tradition in this Parliament. Only Ministers and Deputy Ministers are allowed in the Well of Parliament. But all other officials, no matter how highly placed, we usually meet with them outside the Chamber. So, after the adjournment is announced, I ask that we all go to committee room 1 to engage the Governor. I will ask the press to be fully represented. Other interested individuals are all invited to hear what the Bank Governor is going to say.

ANNOUNCEMENT

All Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Parliamentary Committees are invited for a workshop on the constitutional review to be conducted by the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC), at Committee Room 1 on Wednesday, 26th March, 2014 at 11:00 a.m.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Yansaneh, have they been told before now?

MR YANSANEH (Table Clerk): Mr Speaker, I am only given this announcement now to make Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Well, let them be told now. Officially, they have to be told. You cannot just tell them here in this Chamber. Honourable Emma Kowa, I understand that there should be a workshop to be organised by the IPU, had that been announced?

MR YANSANEH: The ICT Department is kindly requesting Members of Parliament to take a snap shot from Mr Alie S. Kanu and Edward Koroma, Photographers and also fill the bio-data form which would be used to update Members website. The ICT Department humbly appeals for Members of Parliament to view the website because there are relevant information that can be used for debates. The address is www.parliament.gov.sl

There would be a training workshop for all Members of Parliament on gender based violence on Wednesday, 26th March, 2014 in Committee Room 1 at 10:00 a.m. Signed by Honourable Emma Kowa.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Table Clerk, this is the problem. How do we reconcile this? If it were for a question of the venue, I am sure we have two or more rooms, but it is the same people that will have to attend these programmes and the same time. How do we reconcile this situation?

Mr Majority Leader and Madam Minority Leader, I would ask that you meet with the cooperation of the two Whips and the Honourable Emma Kowa to decide on these two meetings. This is because all of these meetings are being organised by the UNDP. The Constitutional Review Committee meeting is very important and the IPU training is equally important, but the timing is the same. Therefore, I hope you will try to find some kind of accommodation so that both could be accommodated. I ask that the aforementioned Leaders meet and decide on the time.

ADJOURNMENT

(The House rose at 10.38 a.m. and was adjourned until Thursday, 27th March, 2014, at 10.00 a.m.)