

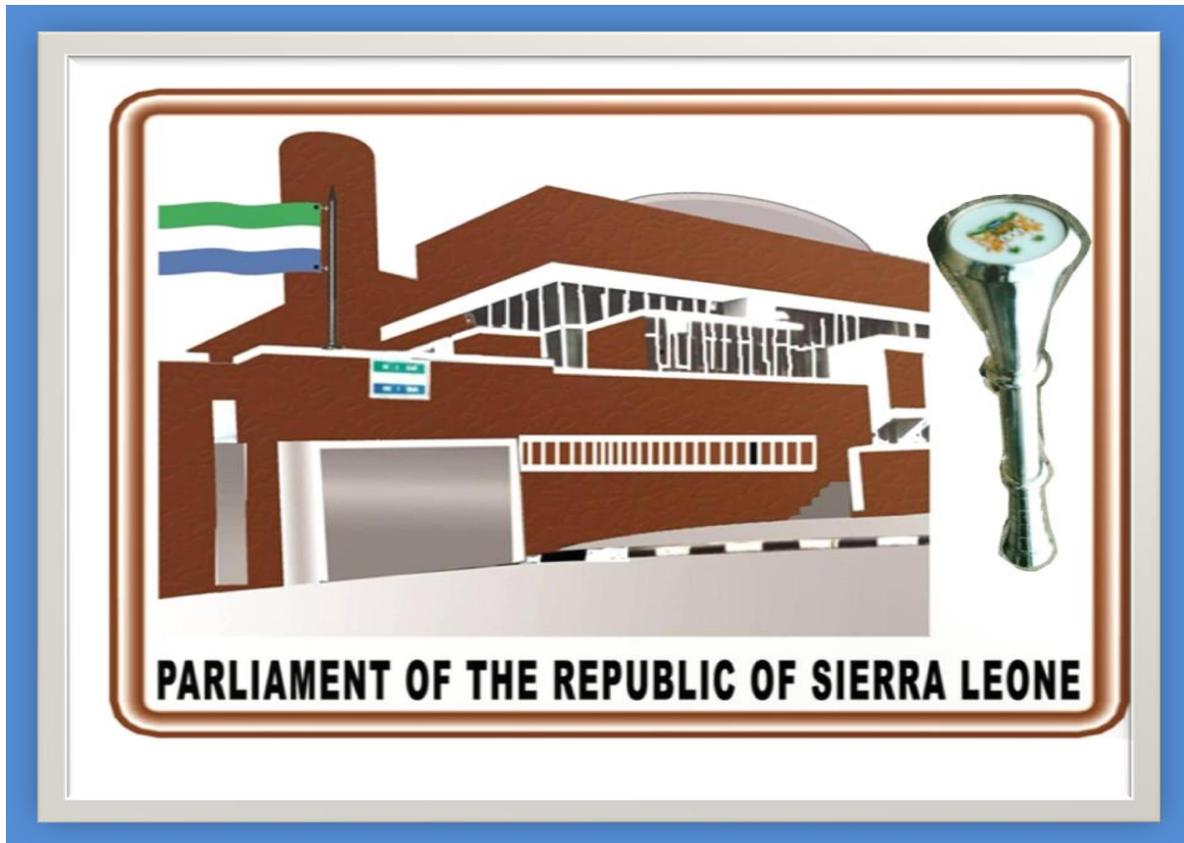
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIRST SESSION-FIRST MEETING
TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 2013**

SESSION – 2012/2013



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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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 Tuesday, 26th November, 2013.

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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**

Tuesday, 26th November, 2013.

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

I. PRAYERS

[The Legislative Clerk, Mr Lamin Yansaneh, Read the Prayers].

[The Speaker, Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

HON. IBRAHIM S. SESAY (*Clerk of Parliament*): Honourable Members, I announce to you the unavoidable absence of the Speaker of the House. And pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Standing Order (10) and Section 88 (b) of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, I call on the Deputy Speaker to preside.

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: Mr Clerk, is Mr Speaker not within the precinct of Parliament? If he is not within the precinct of Parliament, we have to know. But if he is here, you should have said so. You said earlier that he was absent but he is within the precincts of Parliament and is seated in his office, an office that is very close to this Chamber.

HON. BUNDU SONGOWA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that SO 5(2) be suspended to continue the business of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALLIEU BADARA K. MUNU: I so second Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question Proposed Put and Agreed to)

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR TUESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2013.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the Record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 19th November, 2013. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? There being no amendment can someone move that the record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 19th November, 2013 be adopted as presented?

HON. ALHAJI SERAY DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABI KALOKO: I so second Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter motion?

(Question Proposed Put and Agreed to)

*(The record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday, 19th November, 2013
was unanimously adopted)*

III. PAPERS LAID

THE CHAIRMAN, PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE FIRST REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE REMUNERATION OF THE CHAIRMAN AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SIERRA LEONE HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSION.

HON. DR FODAY I. SUMAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a result of the unavoidable absence of the Chairman, I rise to lay on the Table of the House the First Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Finance and Development on the Remuneration of the Chairman and other Members of the Sierra Leone Health Service Commission *(Applause)*.

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR F. B. L. MANSARAY *(Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development)*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have the utmost honour to lay the following documents on the Table of the House:

(A) ADDITIONAL FINANCING AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IDA), TO FINANCE THE SECOND PHASE OF THE REPRODUCTIVE AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECT, DATED 11TH OCTOBER, 2013

(B) FINANCING AGREEMENTS SIGNED BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB), TO FINANCE THE RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT, DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013.

(i) LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND – (RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT), DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013

(ii) PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT AMONGST THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT), DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013

(iii) PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT AMONGST THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (ACTING AS EXECUTING AGENCIES OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY), (RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT), DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013

(iv) PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT AMONGST THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (ON BEHALF OF THE FRAGILE STATE FACILITY) AND (THE RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT) DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013.

(v) PROTOCOL OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (RURAL WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT), DATED 28TH OCTOBER, 2013.

V. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AFFAIRS, HON. ALIMAMY A. KAMARA

HON. ALIMAMY A. KAMARA (*Minister of Youths Affairs*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following

Charter which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 3rd October, 2013; the African Youths Charter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are all in agreement that issues of young people are pertinent, not only to us as a nation, but to the region of Africa and the Globe as a whole. On that vein, our beloved nation joined other countries in July, 2006 in Banjul, The Gambia, to adopt the African Youth Charter which in itself emanated from the fact that the African Union was trying to find a pathway to the practical development of the African Continent. And in doing so, they came up with a strategic plan of action. This was referred to as 'the Consultative Plan of Action for the Development of the Continent from 2004 to 2007. In that development plan of action for this Continent, they agreed that they should look into issues of the young people. Thus, they ended up after many consultations, having a Charter which was put in place with rules and regulations to see the role of the young people in the development of the Continent as a whole.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Charter itself is divided into different components, which include the preamble and the definition. The definition gives the meaning of the word youth in Africa. It is however well known that all persons within the African Region between the ages of 15 to 35 are classified as young people and henceforth they are called youths. Part one of the Charter, which contains about twenty-eight Articles, gives out the role of these young people and their duties with regards to the development of the Continent. What should be the role of the States within the region in this? In other words, what an individual State must do to enhance the development of young people ranging from their welfare, livelihood and other things that have to do with Law and Order, health issues, issues of unemployment, issues of education, skills training and the like. It also shows very clearly the role of the young people in ensuring that they participate in the development of their respective countries, by ensuring that they don't just practice democracy, but live within the tenets of it. Article 29, which is the final provision of the Charter, looks at the single Clause, Signatory, Issues of Ratification and Amendments of the Charter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, out of fifty-four countries in Africa, forty-one countries adopted the Charter in Banjul. And as I speak, thirty-three countries have already endorsed it. Sierra Leone, being one of the countries that adopted the Charter, we have done our own part to ensure that the issue is taken to Cabinet and have been adopted. We laid it in this Honourable House in October and we are here with humility to put forward to this Honourable House's consideration. There is every need for us to ratify this Charter. This means there is so much in terms of the development of the young people, not only in Sierra Leone, but to the Continent as a whole.

Having said that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that this Honourable House ratify the following Charter which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 3rd October, 2013; 'The African Youth Charter.'

(Question Proposed)

HON. IBRAHIM M. BANGURA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is another big day for the young people of this Nation. Seventy percent of what is embedded in this Charter has already been implemented by this Government. And that is very good for the development of this nation. One of the things I don't want to bother you with is our human rights records. The Charter talks about freedom of association, freedom of movement, protection of family, right to property, freedom of expression etc. These are rights which this Government is always giving out to people. You don't have a situation wherein our Government is depriving young people, especially from expressing their views. But the most important thing here is their participation in the socio-economic and political development of this nation. We have before us this morning the Minister of Youth Affairs. He is a very young man. The Minister of Water Resources and the Minister of Health are also very young. What I want to draw the attention of this Government to is the fact that we need to spend the little resources we have to educate our youths and provide them with the necessary skills needed. This is very important for the development of the youths of this nation

and the country as a whole. We have many educated youths in this country. We have graduates from our various Universities who are jobless because what they study is not compatible with what obtains now. We are now in the era of technology. And if that is so, we need more skill training equipment in Vocational institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give you an example. There was a time when people were clamouring for work in the African Minerals. Well, some of them were saying they are electricians and that they studied from OIC. The Human Resource Manager had to go there to verify their claims. When he went there, he found out that there is not even one electric lamp in the entire classroom. Therefore, the most important thing we need to do is to educate and train our young people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of the National Youth Policy, I know that this Government has tried very hard in achieving the aims and objectives of the National Youth Policy. The Ministry has also tried its best; but we need to have a comprehensive data of the youths in this country. We need to know the educated youths in this country. We need to know the skilled ones and we need to know the unskilled youths. If we do this, we will be able to plan for them properly... - *(Applause)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other issue I want to talk about is our role as Parliamentarians towards the young people of this nation. The role of politicians towards the development of the young people is of great importance. Are we to use them sensibly or misuse them? The answer is, we should not misuse our youths at all. If we misuse them, it means that we are misusing the development of this country. This is the time we need to support them in terms of providing them with the necessary skills they need. We have to make provisions for their employment, rather than using them for our own selfish ends. During the World Youth Day Celebration at the Miata Conference Centre, I told them that gone are days when the youths were waiting to be provided for. It is time for them to go and look for their greener pastures, not only outside the country but within this country. Sierra Leone is endowed with so many resources and I believe they should tap from those resources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of young people in politics, I am proud to say that I came into politics at a very young age. I was a Councillor during the SLPP days, and at that time, I was a youth. I became a Member of Parliament in 2007 and I am doing my second term as a Member of Parliament. This simply means that if you work hard, you might even become the President of this country. I have always been saying that we must come together to help our colleagues. And to help the young people of this nation, we need to create jobs for them. Parliamentarians should look for jobs for the youths of this country. It is our responsibility to create an enabling environment for our youths. It is our responsibility to create jobs for our people. We have the opportunity to do so because we make the laws that govern every aspect of our existence. I have more than 250 employees working in my company. I know there are people here that can do the same. All we need is determination.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I crave your indulgence to ratify this Charter so that the young people of this country may benefit equally as the youths in the other African nations. I thank you very much.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to lend my voice to this important debate. The Charter before us this morning is very important. We are one of the few countries in Africa that have not ratified it. We are in a hurry and we need to do it now.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Youth Charter is a legal framework that guides and supports the policies, programmes and actions for the development and empowerment of youths across Africa. In that vein therefore, I want us all to ratify and domesticate this Charter. We want to see young people in the governance arrangement of this country. The youths should take their rightful positions in all spheres of life. This Charter addresses several issues, ranging from the rights and freedom of the young people to welfare, development and responsibilities of the youths. We as young people should now take this country as ours. We should take the leadership of this country. We should not be only be seen as supporters and people who run behind politicians, but

people who determine the fate and the economic development of Sierra Leone... -
(Applause).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Youth Charter, if ratified, will allow member States to guarantee the rights of the young people so that they can have the right to own their own property, to move freely and associate with whatever organisation or association they want. It will enable them to express themselves freely. This is a Charter that is going to guarantee their freedom and participation. Sierra Leone is in a haste to ratify this Agreement. And when the President was here, he dedicated this term of his Presidency to the young people of this nation. We want to see the young people develop and realise their God given potentials. It should not just be on paper. It should be practical. We want to see young people coming from the ghettos. We want to see young people holding responsible positions in this country. We want to see more young people in this Parliament so that at the end of the day, they can articulate their views. If more young people are in this Parliament, we will make sure we streamline the policies of the youths correctly. I thank you very much.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Youth Charter before us is timely. I say it is timely because the issue of Youth unemployment has now become a global phenomenon. In Europe for example, the European Union has taken up the issue of youth unemployment seriously. Therefore, it is not a new thing for us to encounter problems that are faced by the youths of this country. If we have such a Charter, let us accept that we have taken strides along the path to actually bring the youths to the forefront of development. If today we have people like the Honourable Silikie, Honourable Paran and Honourable Aaron in Parliament, it means that Sierra Leone has already taken strides along this path to bring the youths into the main stream of our political life. Ratifying this Charter is only endorsing actions that have been taken by this Government to improve the lives of the youths of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to Honourable Members in this House to ratify this Charter. This is because we are only lending our voices to the

Global and the African Voice to give respect that it's supposed to accord the youth of this Continent. We have already taken the lead by establishing the Youth Commission and other Youth Groups that have emanated over the years. We must embrace this Youth Charter so that we all become part of the African Youth family. Thank you very much.

HON. EMMA KOWA: Thank you Mr Speaker. It is very good that the Youth Charter is before us today. There are a lot of important things in this Charter that the youths can actually benefit from. The youth population is growing in our country and has grown ever since. Many of these youths are graduates from renown Universities. some are students but yet the unemployment rate is very high. We have to look at issues that affect the youths. Our youths do not only need employment, but they also need training and skills in areas relevant to our Mining Companies so that they can be employed. But because of the lack of the necessary trainings and skills, many of them are not employed. And unemployment in a country brings nothing more than idleness. Our youths need good role models that can push them forward. The youth population of this country is our future. If we look after them today, the future of this country is assured.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the Minister himself is putting all his efforts to bring the youths together in this country. I want him to encourage each and every youth without discrimination. This is because it is very vital that tolerance is encouraged among the youths and violence is discouraged.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a special day for the youths of this country. I will round up by telling all the youths in this country to make good use of this Charter and all the provisions that it makes for them. I am saying this because they will be our future leaders. They will be our future contributors in this Parliament and in other areas. I thank you very much for listening.

HON. DR SHO-SAWYER: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be very brief in making my contribution to the ratification of the African Youth Charter. I am very happy for this Charter. We should ratify this Charter and become part of it. When I was growing up, it was known that we the young ones were to be seen and not heard. We have been through a stage where we were only to be seen and not heard. We have been through a stage where men and women were used only during conflicts or violence periods. We have passed that stage and today, we are talking of empowering young men and women of this country. And I believe we need to congratulate ourselves for this gesture. When we talk about young people participating in the development of our country, even though one of my colleagues said it is timely, I believe we are late in the process. Even though we are late in the process we need to fast-track this process now. And that is why we need to ratify this Charter today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in many countries today, the youths are the engines of economic growth. When you look at many developed countries in the world, Governments or Private Partnerships go into the Universities and invest into the education of the younger generation. These Companies go into the Universities to help train their Youths. In Sierra Leone, there is nothing like this. I have seen this in so many areas. I have worked in many Ministries, Departments and Agencies in this country. Most of the Civil Servants in those MDAs are not competent enough to even use the computers that have been provided for them. And these are old Civil Servants who do not want to give young people the opportunity to be employed. The young graduates from the Universities with the requisite knowledge required for the job, but are denied of it. There are jobs in this Country that only the younger graduates can do, but they are not doing them because they have been occupied by the elder people who are not even supporting the young people but suppressing them. So, I think it is appropriate that this Charter is here with us today. Only the younger people have the radical thinking to work faster and move faster in order to lift this country up. And I believe with the advice of our elders, they would be able to lift Sierra Leone up. But we need the support and this is what the African Charter is here to give us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should not forget that our role is not only to ratify this Charter, but to also preach the role and responsibilities to the youths of this country. The Government should not be the only one to support these youths of this nation. We need to talk about the role and responsibility of youths. Youths need to be disciplined. They need to work hard. There should be a professional work ethics for the youths. We need to teach the youths of this country professional work ethics. They need to be disciplined and law-abiding citizens. This is a role that we need to play, whilst the Government is providing the incentives for them. We also need to address the role and the responsibilities of the youths in Nation-building. I ask that we speedily ratify the African Youth Charter. I thank you all.

HON. P. C. KONGOMOH JOSEPH ALIE KAVURA II: Thank you Mr Speaker. I heard some people saying that I am not a youth and therefore I should not contribute. I want to remind all of us here that life is like crossing a river. The first river we have all crossed and we now know what is under that river. This Charter we are about to ratify is very importance to the youths of this Country. According to the English dictionary, youth age starts from 15. This youth age is the most dangerous and most adventurous of the human life span. And so, we as the elderly people have to love, guide and be by them. This is because they are the producers. If we don't guide them properly, they produce the worst for us. But if we guide them accordingly, they produce the best for everybody. When a child is growing up, he/she will not know what is right or wrong. And when he/she reaches the youth age, he is neither a child nor an elder.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I was a child, I thought only children use lavatory. This is because children always do theirs openly (*Laughter*). It was only when I grew into the youthful age that I knew it is a continued process in life. When you are a youth, you are at the middle of your age and the middle age people are the producers. They are the people that can tap the resources we have so that we can use them. This is why I said this Charter is very important and I encourage all of us to ratify it very speedily.

HON ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as one of the beneficiaries of this Charter, I think it is prudent for me to lend my voice to this debate. Today is the day Sierra Leone has put aside party interests to join the other countries in this Continent to empower the young men and women in this country. Today is the day some of us can feel very proud because as a young man in this House of Parliament, I think I represent the young ones out there. I am the face of the young people out there. The African Youth Charter as Honourable Hassan Sesay from Tonkolili said is very important. And some of the Articles embedded in it are not a novelty at all. I want to tow the line with him and just highlight few of the gains and developments this Government has undertaken to see that this Charter is being implemented. The right to life, the right to property, freedom of expression, freedom of association are the basic rights that this Government is working towards. And I think we the young people have benefitted more than ever in the history of this country. If we reflect back what had happened in the past, you will agree with me that young people have been marginalised in this country. I think we should give thanks to God and we must say we are blessed under this Government. We must say thanks to God and we must say we are blessed under the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. That is why I said I am blessed under this Government. But if we really want to see the realisation of this Charter, there are few things we need to take into consideration. And one of them is the introduction of Youth Apprenticeship Scheme, which will help address some of the unemployment problems our youths are facing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is one of the policies that are being introduced in Australia when youth unemployment became a very big challenge. The Government of Australia introduced the Youth Unemployment Scheme; and they established job centres all over the country. These job centres became almost the offices of the youths. They go to these job centres where they do their apprenticeship. Sometimes the Government gives incentives to these youths. At the end of the day, it became very clear that the country became so over-skilled and unemployment fell down to nearly 1.2%. We want to see similar things being introduced in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we also need a comprehensive overhaul of some of the school syllabuses being taught in our tertiary institutions. They don't in any way reflect the 21st Century reality and they don't in any way reflect the demands of big companies in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must also be mindful of the culture of alcoholism and drugs in this country. The new Indian Company syndrome of alcohol that has been introduced in this country is killing our youths slowly. Mr Speaker, the percentage of alcohol in these packets that are sold for Le500 in this country can be purchased in other parts of the world for over \$50. We cannot let this continue if we want to realise the potentials of our youths in this country. The Honourable Mitchell Sho-Sawyer mentioned some of the responsibilities of the youth in this country. We have a responsibility to the State. We have a responsibility to even our parents. This Charter is very clear on that Mr Speaker. We are experiencing problems in our homes these days. Our brothers and sisters are challenging the elderly and even their parents. When we were in school in the 90s and late 2000s, we used to wear trousers right up to the navel. We used to call that pattern of school dressing as 'chase the navel'. But these days, boys put their trousers down their buttocks. These are some of the cultures and practices that we need to discourage and encourage our youths not to emulate. With these few words Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I ask that this House ratify the African Youth Charter as quick as possible. I thank you so much (*Applause*).

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI (*Deputy Minority Leader of the House*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much for this opportunity. This is a great House. This House is great because this is where everything begins and ends. What we have before us is very good. It is good because we on this side and you on that side have no reason to criticise in any way or form. In 1996, when this country returned to civilian democratic rule, the then President, Dr Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabba promised the youths of this country that this day would come. And he worked assiduously throughout the eleven years of his Presidency to fulfil that promise. He promised the youths of this country that someday, a Minister will come and finish where he left off. The 30% that

was kept aside for the youths in making sure that our National Army, the Police Force, the National Employment Team and other programmes that were put together then, are kept alive. As far as I am concerned, the educational sector was geared towards training the youths of this country so that this country will not go back to war. This Government should make sure that the energy, ability and capacity of our youths are maximised to the optimal level. If we don't work for those who are coming after us, then we will not be able to prepare for the future of this country. And these youths are the ones that are going to replace us in the future. If we don't take care of them, they will become failures in society and that will be to the detriment of this country and to all of us. So, we must look after them well. We started looking after them when the war ended. We have to continue with that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Africa has finally realised that she must look after its youths. And Africa as a Continent has worked through the Organisation of African Unity now called the African Union in making sure that this document before us is ratified. The document was put together and was signed by the Government of this country in 2006. If I have any regret that I have to apologise for, it is the fact that the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) lost the 2007 Elections. Otherwise this document was going to be ratified in December, 2007 if the SLPP would have won those elections. But I thank this Minister for bringing it to this House. I warned him when he was taking exit from this Chamber that when you go out there, make sure you work hard. And I think he has been working since his appointment as Minister of Youth Affairs. This simply means that he listened to the advice that we gave him; unlike one or two others who left here and are now in limbo. So continue working hard Mr Minister.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the young Honourable Member from the Western Area who just told us about his experience from Australia. I thank you very much. You learnt a lot when you were out there. You are proving to us that you have come with plenty of knowledge. I really want to thank all of us who are going to ratify this document. This document is your document. The then President, Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba felt sorry for the youths of this country. He came to learn that some of our

colleagues were using them only during election time to create problems. He decided that they should become useful citizens. He made sure that our country provide for them so that they become some of the best performers in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for those of you who will make use of these opportunities that have been created not only in this Charter, but also in the National Youth Commission, will do very well. You will become like any one of us or better than us tomorrow. I wish you well because this is your Charter. On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank this House and I wish that we will give it a speedy ratification.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I was informed by the Majority Leader that the Majority Whip will be standing on his behalf.

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker Honourable Members, as said by other speakers, today is a history making day for the young people of this country. This Charter is talking about youths and today, you hear about young people everywhere you go. When you go to the church, you hear about young adults and so are other places. Mr Speaker, we all know that people from 15 to 35 years of age are referred to as youths. But let me seize this opportunity to propose to the Minister of Youth Affairs the age bracket for young people. Now that we have an age bracket of 15–35 for youths, I want to propose as Acting Leader of this House that people between the ages of 36-50 years be referred to as young adults (*Laughter*).

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: The Acting Minority Leader did say they prophesied that the APC will be the party that will finish this project. I will say that even the Bishop dreamt that the APC would come and reign for more than 40 years. So, it is no secret at all. And Mr Speaker, some have said that this Charter came late to this House. But I must say that the domestication of this Charter has started long ago. For example, Article 11 talks about 'Youth Participation.' Article 2(A) says: We need Youths in Parliament. Count the number of youths in this House. 2(B) of Article 11 did say youths

must be involved in decision making process. We have youths today in high positions and in high places.

HON. ANSU J. KAIKAI: I rise on S. O. 33(b).

THE SPEAKER: Yes, what does S. O. 33(b) say?

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: You are not permitted.

THE SPEAKER: What does 33 (b) say? Let us read S.O. 33 (b).

HON. ANSU KAIKAI: S. O. 33(b) says: *“to elucidate some matters, a member in the course of his speech provided that the Member speaking is willing to give way and resume his seat and that the Member wishing to interrupt will be called by the Speaker or Chairman.”*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you willing?

HON. CLAUDE KAMANDA: I am not willing Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Acting Minority Leader, please take your seat.

HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the same Article 11 (2)b is requesting young people’s involvement in decision making. Count the number of Youths today in Ministries, Departments and Agencies. So we are far gone with the domestication of this particular document. Let us go to Article 12 that talks about the National Youth Policy. We have gone ahead to even translate it into a Commission. Are you not aware of the National Youth Commission? As I speak, we have the Youth Skill Acquisition Centre for every youth all over the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, under the Youth Policy, we have the National Youth Affairs Ministry. This is in translation of the National Youth Policy in order to involve youths so that the youths can be directed and have offices. Youths should know where youth issues are addressed. I want to emphasize, as already stated by other speakers concerning the responsibilities of the youths. It is embedded in this Charter. It is in Article 26(A, N and O). It says: *“the youth must be seen responsible to every direct responsibility.”* The Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Youth Commission are charged

with the responsibility of making the youths of this country responsible. Youths must take the challenge to see that they take the lead, if we want this country to move ahead. If they want to be employed and placed in certain positions, they must be responsible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other speaker did say that in the past, youths are used to commit violence. But today, we must thank God that the youths are directed and channelled appropriately. With this Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move that we ratify this Charter. I thank you.

HON. ALIMAMY A. KAMARA (*Minister of Youth Affairs*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank Members of Parliament for the contributions they have made so far. I am happy that across the ayes, we are all in agreement that there is need for us to ratify this Charter. I also agree that we as a Government believe that we are not working or operating in isolation, but rather we are working for the furtherance and development of the State. Therefore, continuity is the bench-mark. The Chairman of the Committee on Youths and Sports was appealing that we should put more efforts to ensure the participation of youths in every aspect of development. We all know that we are faced with unemployment in this country. If I should juxtapose that to the contribution of the Acting Minority Leader, he said that the then Government saw the need and endorsed this Charter in Banjul. I think it is a challenge for all of us and for this very House. I am in agreement with the Chairman. I have always maintained that this House is the epicentre of leadership if this Nation is to go forward. And ranging from contributions to the responsibilities of the young people, as it has just been anchored by the Chief Whip and others, I think it is the time for us to come together and see what we can practically do to move forward the issues of young people and try as much as possible to put politics aside.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe on our own side, like the Honourable Member from Western Urban, Dr Sho-Sawyer said, efforts have already been made, despite the fact that we took it from that level in 2006. We have also ensured as a

Government that we adhere, (though we are now ratifying it) to most of the Articles and Principles contained in the Charter. That is why today we have the Youth Commission; and in two weeks' time, we will be taking it to Cabinet. By the first quarter of next year, we shall be taking to Cabinet and by extension to Parliament the National Youth Service Scheme Bill. The President of this country believes that we are left with no alternative but to ensure that we put issues of young people forward and practically ensure that we move them forward. We cannot give all of them jobs; but as leaders, we can endeavour in our respective ways to also assist. But more importantly, the documents are here and they are very clear. That is why we shall be coming to Parliament and we will be coming again with other policies which will help us ensure that all citizens adhere strictly to this document. I want to see Parliament making sure that the Minister of Youth in this country will not go beyond the borders of the rules and regulations as to how to deal with youth issues in this country. That is why we have development partners.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the African Youth Commission is talking about interfacing with the development partners so that we can have a common platform and take forward issues of young people to the fore front as a Continent. But the question is are we there to ensure that development partners, NGOs, CSOs, the Minister, the Commission and everybody adheres and work according to the rules prescribed? If we do that, I want to assure you that we would be on the right path. We are not just ratifying this, but we are practically going to ensure that the development of this country continues.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in terms of representation in Parliament, both sides of the ayes have young people representing different areas. Few years back, when somebody talked about the youth of this country, we know what comes to our minds. Today, it is different. And this takes on board the issues of the young ladies. When we talk about youths, we are not just talking about the young men. Issues that have to do with sex, reproduction, sexual abusive, human rights, freedom of association are all

embedded in this Charter. So, what we should do like the Paramount Chief has said is to teach them those skills that are good and to maintain the culture and tradition of our Continent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the creation of job for these youths is very important. Let us all work together to achieve these goals. I am very willing and ready to come to the Committee at any time I am called upon to discuss issues concerning the youths of this country. There are companies that do promise our young people jobs; and when they fail to do so, there is bound to be tension. As politicians, we must wake up to ensure that we begin to implement reality. Let us do what we are saying. And many a time it is not just the Government. These are issues we have to look into. This Charter is also clear as to how we go about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am willing and ready to give account if we are to take these issues forward. It is not a matter for the President alone. Nobody in this Honourable House will doubt the integrity and the sincerity of the President. But I am of the opinion that many a time when the leader speaks, all of us are duty bound to follow. Let us come forward and see whether we are in line with the Charter in terms of allocations. I don't want to bore you because this Charter is clear and fair. We are all in agreement as far as this Charter is concerned. We all believe that this Charter is in place and we should work together to ensure that governance, health and all other issues that have to do with the young people of this country are in place. We should be together in pursuing them.

On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Charter which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 3rd October, 2013; the African Youth Charter.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

(Government motion has been ratified)

ADJOURNMENT

The House rose at 11:45 a.m. and was adjourned till Thursday, 28th November, 2013.