



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 28<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017**

*SESSION – 2016/2017*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 36**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.

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## **IV. MOTION**

PROPOSER: HON ANSUMANA JAIA KAIKAI

SECONDER: HON FREDERICK S. SOURIE

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO.115 OF 2017 PUBLISHED ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 IN THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE SIERRA LEONE GAZETTE VOL. CXLVIII, NO 38 DATED, 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2017 AND LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017 BE DEBATED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 170[7]<sup>[C]</sup> OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE [ACT NO.6 OF 1991]

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THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION



*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

**Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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**FIFTH SESSION – FIRST MEETING  
OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT  
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 2017.**

**I. PRAYERS**

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

*[The House met at 10:47 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].*

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

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of S. O. 5[2]*

**II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTINGS HELD ON TUESDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> AND WEDNESDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017 RESPECTIVELY.**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page ? Page 6? Page 7? There being no corrections or amendments, could somebody move for the adoption of record of Votes and Proceedings for Parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 as presented?

**HON. MOHAMED KAMARA:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. KUSAN SESAY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 has adopted as presented]*

**THE SPEAKER:** We go to the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4 Page 5? There being no corrections or amendments could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 as presented?

**HON AMADU KANU:** I so move Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON ALIMAMY G. KARGBO:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 has been adopted as presented]*

### **III. PAPER LAID**

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

**MR MOHAMED BANGURA** *[Minister of Information and Communications]* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of the House the following document:

Joint Venture Agreement between the Ministry of Information and Communications, representing the Government of Sierra Leone and WTS Media Group Limited [Care of World Trade Services Limited], A Limited Liability Company, having its registered Office at 32 Bower Hill Industrial Estate, Bower Terrace, Epping CM16 7BN, United Kingdom.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am standing on S.O 25. I am giving a notice that the document laid by the Minister of Information and Communications be debated.

**THE SPEAKER:** This is not a Statutory Instrument, but an agreement. It is certainly going to be debated.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, do not blame the Honourable Member, a period of five years is still not enough. Honourable Members, one could still be in the process of learning. One of the greatest poets, Tennyson's Ulysses said, "**You follow knowledge like a sinking star.**" So, you continue to learn.

Honourable Members, I would like to interrupt the proceedings to formally recognise the presence of Ambassador Ibrahim Sorie, a veteran parliamentarian as you all know  
*[Applause].*

#### **IV. MOTION**

PROPOSER: HON ANSUMANA JAIA KAIKAI

SECONDER: HON FREDERICK S. SOURIE

BE IT RESOLVED

THAT THE STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO.115 OF 2017 PUBLISHED ON THE 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2017 IN THE SUPPLEMENT TO THE SIERRA LEONE GAZETTE VOL. CXLVIII, NO 38 DATED, 13<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2017 AND LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2017 BE DEBATED, PURSUANT TO SECTION 170[7][C] OF THE CONSTITUTION OF SIERRA LEONE [ACT NO.6 OF 1991]

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on Standing Order 31. I rise to withdraw the motion that I so graciously moved in this House that is now on the Order Paper. This is because I believe that the NEC, up to this point, has done a fantastic job. But by withdrawing this motion, I also want all of us to be aware of the fact that there is a Statutory Order, which is Statutory Order 156 and that was not part of Statutory Order 155. I am therefore asking that Members of Parliament take cognisance of those two Statutory Instruments. And as far as we are concerned, Statutory 155 is the Statutory Order that I moved a motion on which I am withdrawing now. Therefore, let the 21 days move on. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, please resume your seat for the time being. You are withdrawing your motion and I hope you are not unaware of what S.O. 31 says. It reads: **"Motion or an amendment may be withdrawn at the request of the mover, if, on Mr Speaker asking whether it is the pleasure of the House that the motion or amendment be withdrawn, there is no dissenting voice."**

**HON ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** On that note, Mr Speaker, I am informing the House now that I stand on S.O. 31 and that I am simply withdrawing my motion.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder? Your motion must be seconded because it is a motion.

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** Mr Speaker, I second the motion.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, a motion to the effect of what the Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai has said has been seconded. Any counter motion?

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Mr Speaker, to a very large extent, I am aware of practices of withdrawal of motions; but on this occasion, I want the House, under your auspices, to please take cognisance of the fact that I moved my motion and I have withdrawn it.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Mr Speaker, we are not averse to the Honourable Member desiring to withdraw his motion. All we are saying is that he must do it in tandem with the rules. It has to be done pursuant to S.O 31 and that is what we are saying.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, remain seated please and contain yourself. The motion has been withdrawn and legal effect to the withdrawal has been given by the motion being seconded. But the Standing Order says, **"...if, on Mr Speaker asking whether it is the pleasure of the House that the motion or amendment be withdrawn, there is no dissenting voice."** Honourable Members, are you satisfied that this motion should be withdrawn?

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Mr Speaker, point of order. I do not want to say in the open. Can I approach the bench and remind us of something that transpired in this Well because incidences has happened and have occurred. A specific example is that Honourable Umar Paran Tarawally moved a motion against the passport and when he withdrew that motion, there was a seconder who was ready to pursue it. They said as long as the mover has withdrawn that Motion, there was no motion. That precedence was set and it is in the Hansard. So, I want us to take cognisance of that for precedence sake.

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** Mr Speaker, it was the wish of Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai to move a motion; and today, he has thought it fit to withdraw that motion. I have seconded the withdrawal of that Motion. I see no reason why we are going to debate anything on it.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, we are guided and governed by rules in this House as Members of Parliament; and as a Parliament, rules governing us are sacrosanct. The rules are sacrosanct and we have to follow them scrupulously and religiously. Standing Order 31 says: **“A motion or an amendment may be withdrawn at the request of the mover”** and that has been done. **“If, on Mr Speaker asking whether it is the pleasure of the House that the motion or amendment be withdrawn there is no dissenting voice.”**

Honourable Members, if I am to remind you, and in reminding you, I wish to state here that I am reminded of the fact that on the day when Honourable Umar Paran Tarawally withdrew his motion, Standing Order 31 was complied with to the letter. There was no dissenting voice then. Therefore, the motion in question then was carried ‘nem con.’ ‘Nem con’ here is the abbreviated form for nemine contradicente, which means nobody contradicente. But here is a situation wherein there is not only a dissenting voice, but there appear to be dissenting voices.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKIA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is extremely interesting and this is why I love Parliament. And this is why I have decided that Parliament is my home. On a Statutory Instrument, I brought my motion and I have withdrawn it, but there is a dissenting voice. Therefore, I would call on Mr Speaker to direct the House.

**HON. AMADU KANU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as legislators, it is our constitutional responsibilities, among other things, to adhere to the dictates of our own creation. I would want to therefore refer my senior colleague Honourable Member on the other side to be mindful of Standing Order 31. I would also want to draw the attention of the Deputy Minority Leader that, even if we are to go by the law of precedence, this case in question is not tenable. We are the custodian of our own instrument and we must not be seen abusing our very creation. I rest my case, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** And my reply to what you have said is that [as the Lawyers always say], precedence are laws, but here there is no precedent because in the case of the

motion being referred to here, there was no dissenting voice. Therefore, that could not be quoted as a precedent.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the mover of this Motion; i.e., the Deputy Minority Leader, has asked you to guide the House. On that note, I want to refer you to S.O. 38 [1]. Mr Speaker, even though it is clearly stated here in the rules that Members should speak on every issue for at least 30 minutes, it has always been your wisdom to guide this House that Members could speak for 10 minutes each or 5 minutes in most cases.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, there is a rule.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, even though there is a rule that Members should speak for 30 minutes on every issue, we have in this House... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. There is a rule counteracting that. You may not know, but there is a rule.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, even S. O. 31 is very conditional that 'if the Speaker.' The onus is on you to guide this House, so that we can proceed. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, Honourable Member, the condition Suahilo 'if,' on Mr Speaker asking whether... and that was why I asked the House.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, it is not shall, it is not that 'Mr Speaker shall ask the House'.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, Honourable Members, if you ask me, as long as there has been a dissenting voice, although in our own case here there has been dissenting voices, this Motion should continue.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** I would not walk out. In this instance, I moved the motion. Let me again say that I moved the motion and I have withdrawn the motion, but if the House so desire to debate this Motion, it can debate it. So, let us go ahead and debate a Motion which sail does not have wings.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, now that this House is in session and the cameras are around, we have to ensure that whatever statement we make for the public are also accurate. All we are saying is that we must respect the rules of this House. So, to say that there is a Motion without wings is not correct. The Motion still exists based on S.O. 31. He can withdraw the Motion, but whether the withdrawal is acceptable or sufficient, it has to be complied with under S.O. 31. So, as far as this House is concerned, his withdrawal is of no effect. The Motion is still before the House. We have to respect our rules and make sure that we inform the public accurately as well. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, perhaps this is the area where this House needs to consider that particular Standing Order because sometimes when these rules are made, they are tested especially when situations arise. In this particular instance, the mover of the Motion has decided to withdraw it and it is from the common sense point of view... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, sit down. Honourable Segepoh S. Thomas, you are a lawyer. There is no talk of common sense. You go according to the rule.

**HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS:** Sorry, Mr Speaker. I apologise profusely. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody who is the mover of a motion has decided to withdraw that particular motion. In law, we would say there is a gap and we call that gap 'lacuna' because somebody who is supposed to move a motion has decided to withdraw it or has decided not to argue that particular motion. It also means that there is an unfortunate situation already created. So, probably we need to look at Standing Order 31 again and see where amendments could be made *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Segepoh S. Thomas, I would like to see whether an amendment could be considered. If therefore you are crying for an amendment, it means that we go according to this as it is. And until it is amended, there is nothing we can do and the lacuna you are talking about, I am very much aware of that. Honourable Segepoh S. Thomas, you are now listening to a senior member of the Bar.

**HON. AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAIN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the position is quite simple. Before you file a Motion, you must be aware of the rules and that is all I wanted to say.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, let me remind you that in those instances or situations where Motions in this House had been withdrawn without any controversy, such situations happened because the Motions had not been put on the Order Paper. There were times in the past when somebody would give notice of a Motion, but before consideration was given to the notice, Members would graciously withdraw. That is not the situation here. We are now talking about what is in black and white and as long as that is the case, the rules must apply. Mr Majority Leader, you wanted to say something?

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe the framers of the Standing Orders did not deliberately put S.O. 31 in the Standing Orders of Parliament. I want to avert the minds of Honourable Members to the history of this Motion. If you could recall the Honourable Member from Kono stood up and wanted to raise a Motion on this same subject matter and we are expected, as elected Members of the people in this Parliament, to attend to every debate with the utmost good faith. Unfortunately, that Motion was hijacked by the Honourable Member from Pujehun District, not knowing that this was the pre-conceived notion that he had. And the Order Paper carries the debate and he is now standing up to withdraw that Motion. It is not therefore reasonable for the Member to say that he is withdrawing the Motion, otherwise some other person would have moved the Motion and the House would have continued the debate on the Motion. This is because S.O. 31 is relevant, otherwise repeatedly people would hide under S.O. 31 and they will be withdrawing Motions that are intended to come before this House. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is rather unfortunate that we are using the word 'hijacked.' If there had been an intention for someone else to move this Motion, that individual did not do it. And if Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai had done and he had thought it fit to withdraw that Motion again, I

think we are still on the right path. Therefore, misused of word cannot really help the situation. We hate to hear the word 'hijacked' and we do not want you to use it, please.

**THE SPEAKER:** But the word hijacked, having regard to the context in which it is used here, is not un-parliamentary.

**HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY:** It is not un-parliamentary, but every parliamentarian has the right to make a move.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, that is never in contention.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I have to come again on this issue, I think when we have issues regarding the laws of this country or interpretation of law, what takes precedence over everything is the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. If you look at Section 94[1] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, it states, **"subject to the provision of this Constitution, Parliament may regulate its own procedure, and may in particular make, amend and revoke Standing Orders for the orderly and conduct of its own proceedings."**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, please read what is in the Constitution. I am very particular about the use of words okay.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** With your leave, I read **"Subject to the provisions to this Constitution, Parliament may regulate its own procedure, and may in particular make, amend and revoke Standing Orders for the orderly conduct for its own proceedings."** Mr Speaker, we are stuck on this Motion this morning. I want to repeat here that the mover of this Motion has already said that you as the Speaker guide the House in this proceeding. As the Honourable Speaker of this House and in several other instances, you have used your wisdom in guiding procedures in this House. So, I want to reiterate that you use your wisdom to guide the House in accordance with what the Constitutional provisions say in Section 94 of the 1991 Constitution of this country. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. I guide the House, but with regards to the rules, the Honourable Member referred the House to Section 94 of the 1991 Constitution in terms of regulating our own procedures. Honourable Members, in regulating our own procedures and in particular having regard to this particular situation, are you comfortable that this Motion should be withdrawn?

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I could have asked that I refer the House to Standing Orders 25[2]. I read, with your permission: **"When notice of a Motion is required, such notice shall be given in writing, signed by the Member and addressed to the Clerk of Parliament. Such notice may be handed by a Member to the Clerk of Parliament, when Parliament is sitting, or may be sent to or left at the Office of the Clerk during working hours."**

Mr Speaker with your leave, I would now ask the House as to whether this was complied with.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, you are a very senior Member of this House, but you are now indicting yourself because you did not do what you should have done.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Indeed, Mr Speaker, I may not be indicting myself, but to ask the Clerk, as far as the procedures and the Standing Orders are concerned, should present to this House the notice that I signed and presented to him.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure that today particularly after listening to the last statement... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I am sure the Honourable Ambassador Ibrahim Sorie must be enjoying the session.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** No! No! No! He must be embarrassed here, Mr Speaker. He is not enjoying it. Mr Speaker, there was a point made this morning by the Honourable Member from Pujehun and that point was very short and simple. Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai from Pujehun stood in this Well before all Members of this House and the general public to say that he was withdrawing his Motion. Mr

Speaker, for that same individual, this is the House of Parliament it is a House of noble men and women. He has withdrawn the Motion and now he is asking whether that Motion is in existence. I am sure we have passed that stage long ago. This House has ruled that there is a Motion and that the Motion should continue. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, here is a document that has been provided by the Clerk of Parliament and it reads:

House of Parliament

OAU Drive

Tower Hill

Freetown

From: Honourable Alhaji Ansumana Jaia Kaikai

To: The Clerk of Parliament

Notice of Motion: To debate Statutory Instrument No 115 of 2017 Public Election Act

Proposer: Honourable Alhaji Ansumana Jaia Kaikai

Seconder: Honourable Sandy Sourie

Previously, it should have been the Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, but that was deleted to say Honourable Sandy Sourie.

The Motion: Be it resolved that the Statutory Instrument No 115 of 2017 that was published on the 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2017 which was laid before this House on the 19<sup>th</sup> September, 2017 be debated in accordance with Standing Order. Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai

Seconder: Honourable Foday Rado Yokie

Mr Clerk, there is no signature on this letter, but that notwithstanding, if the Motion was not Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai's Motion, he should not have withdrawn it.

**HON. AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAINE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe the Speaker ruled on this matter over twenty minutes ago and you have called the

Honourable Member to proceed with his Motion. If he has nothing to say, let him say I have nothing to say in support of this Motion, so that we can proceed. We should not be going back and forth on this issue.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wanted to draw the attention of the Honourable Member from Pujehun, who made a statement the day we had that document in Parliament. He said: **"This Bill is dead on arrival."** That was what he said exactly on that day. We were all in this House when he made that statement. I just wanted to remind the Honourable Member that he made that statement and we should not forget what he said.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, as Speaker of this House, I am suspending deliberations on this Motion. The document is still considered lying on the Table. I am standing the House down for fifteen minutes.

## **BILL.**

THE FOOD AND FEED SAFETY AUTHORITY ACT, 2017

### INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION

**DR ABU BAKARR FOFANAH [Minister of Health and Sanitation]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 be read the first time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*The Bill entitled, the Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 has been read the first time]*

### SECOND READING

**DR ABU BAKARR FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 be read the second time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the World over, consumers are taking unprecedented interest in the way food is produced, processed and marketed and are increasingly calling on their governments to accept greater responsibility for food safety

and consumer protection. According to a fairly recent food born disease surveillance report conducted by the US Centre for Disease Control in 2013, 818 food born disease outbreaks were reported globally that year, resulting in thirteen thousand three hundred and sixty illnesses. It was observed that one thousand and sixty two of those illnesses warranted hospitalisation, sixteen deaths and fourteen food records.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the findings call for tighter food safety control systems to be put in place to protect public health because there is an inverse relationship between strong food safety laws and the incidence of food born illnesses. In the specific case of Sierra Leone, effective food safety control measures have been undermined over the years by the continued existence in our books because of obsolete and fragmented legislations in multiple jurisdictions. For example, you have the Public Health Act of 1960, which largely resides within the domain of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation; the Animal Disease Scar 191, which resides within the domain of the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security; the Produce Inspection Rules of 1966, which probably share between Agriculture and Trade; the Fisheries Management and Development Act, 1994 which resides within the domain of the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources; the Agricultural Act Cap 185, the Standard Act of 1996, which I believe has to do with the Ministry of Trade; the Fisheries Product Regulations, the Plant Fibro Sanitary Rules of 1996 etc.

In addition to the above, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, food safety control measures have further been undermined by institutional weaknesses such as lapses in surveillance, monitoring and enforcement. Secondly, the absence of a central competent authority to effectively oversee all these faces is why the government of Sierra Leone, strategic policy initiatives in the area of public health and trade, the Government mandated the Law Reform Commission to review all the laws, including food safety in Sierra Leone, with the objectives of strengthening these laws on food safety, providing sound regulatory foundation for domestic as well as international trade in food, reforming the current structures covering food safety, promoting public health

and contributing to economic development by maintaining consumer confidence in the food system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the major recommendations contained in the Law Reform Commission Sub-committee on food safety report was the establishment of a Food and Feed Safety Authority in Sierra Leone as a Statutory independent institution with the responsibility of coordinating and implementing all functions relating to food safety regulations, including inspection of food, inspection food burn disease, surveillance monitoring laboratory services, education of consumers on food safety issues and enforcement of food safety regulations. The proposed legislation, for which we are here today, if enacted into law, will represent a major step in implementing the recommendations of the Law Reforms Commission. It will also bring us at par with our neighbours. For example, the Republic of The Gambia has a Food Safety and Quality Authority, Nigeria has the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration, Ivory Coast has the Ivorian Food Safety Agency, Ghana has the Food and Drug Authority. Mr Speaker, the establishment of the Food and Feed Safety Authority will bring immense economy benefits to this country and it will represent a major step in helping our marine and other products to access the bigger markets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this legislation has the concurrence of a key Government ministries like the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. That is why the Honourable Minister of that Ministry is here today; and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security is also represented by the Honourable Deputy Minister and other Ministries. This legislation also has the full concurrence of the Cabinet of which His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, is also the Chairman.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my prayers are that Parliament favourably deliberate and consider this Bill as it represents a key step in moving this nation forward. I thank you very much.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move again that the Bill entitled the Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 be read the second time.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. DR ABDULAI SESAY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to say few things about the Food and Feed Safety Authority Bill. As the saying goes, you are what you eat. This simply means that the food we eat determines our growth, our intelligence and the way we do things. When we consume food that is not the right food, we are susceptible to different diseases as mentioned by the Minister. The issue of food safety is not a new phenomenon in our country. Successive governments have, over the years, worked very hard as a matter of public policy, making recommendations on how to regulate or put legal Instrument to guard the food we eat and how it is managed. As mentioned by the Minister, this whole process was fragmented over the years. You have the Ministry of Health with its own responsibilities, the Ministry of Fisheries, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Local Government; and later the Standards Bureau, the Environmental Protection Agency, etc. All these different sectors were mandated in one way or the other to handle food safety in this country. And when you have such a fragmented structure to deal with issues relating to the food we eat, automatically there is no proper coordination, monitoring and implementation of the policies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the process of looking into this document, I discovered that there are many documents written on this issue. As you can see, all these are documents pertaining to food safety. Unfortunately, not all these bodies are able to coordinate the work that is necessary to ensure food safety in our country. In this regard, I strongly believe that the establishment of a Food and Feed Safety Authority will help reshape and redirect the way we handle food in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as mentioned earlier that the food we eat determines who we are, we are here today to discuss about non-communicable diseases that are killing our people. When you look at the high rate of hypertension in this country, a lot of that has to do with what we eat. If you look at the 'maggi' or the monosodium that is usually sold in the market [which our women in the villages are using to cook], this only only contribute to the number of cases of hypertension that we

are having. Today, if you look at the number of sugar we consume, you would realise that diabetes, which was a sickness of the Western World has become a disease of this country. Today, instead of dealing with infectious diseases, we are being burdened with non-communicable diseases. If you look at the number of people suffering from high cholesterol levels because of the kind of oil being imported into our country that are not properly refined to remove the high cholesterol level, we end up having people dying today with cardio vascular diseases. It is therefore imperative, as a responsible Government that cares for its people that will come up with a formidable body that will look into all the aspects of food safety in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of food safety is not just about exporting food like fish to Europe or other countries, but it is also very important that we know the type of food that is imported into this country. Today, most of the eggs we eat are being imported from foreign countries. Again, the chicken we eat is being imported. What type of food is being provided for these chickens? How are they tamed? We consume these chickens that are super circulated with chemicals, with growth hormones and at the end of the day we consume these chickens and eggs. And some of them are infected with salmonella. There is no way we could check them to see whether they fit for the body.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very important that as a Government, we put regulations in place; not only for what we export, but we must look at what we should do as a country to protect our people. This is because when we consume food that is not good or contaminated, we get sick and it becomes a burden on Government and our health system. When also we come up with the right standards, it will also give us an opportunity to export our food to foreign lands. One of the greatest opportunities we have, as a nation, is our marine resources. However, how do we do our fishing? How do we process the fish? What are the conditions for the packaging of the fish? Today, we are losing millions of dollars because our fish and other marine resources have to go through or transit through other countries for them to be exported to the Europe and other markets. We strongly believe that with the

establishment of sound laws, it will give us an opportunity to export to the EU Markets and other markets. This will also help our economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please allow me to read through a document on the recommendations made by the Africa Union. It says, **"Food insecurity in Africa continues to threaten the lives of millions of people. Food born diseases impose an additional burden on health care system and reduce economic productivity. Furthermore, the implementation of the WTO SPS Agreement poses major challenge to African countries in ensuring that food safety conditions are met in the national supply chain for both domestic and export markets."** As we all know, there are lots of challenges in putting up these standards, but as a responsible Government, it is our responsibility to ensure that we put in place the right mechanisms for us to export our food.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give you a scenario. If you want to export 'ogeri' or 'gari' to America and other Western World, automatically there are people out there who would want to buy our 'ogeri,' 'Kenda,' but we need to reach the standards of packaging; we need to reach the standards of labelling; we need to reach the standards wherein the environments where these food are prepared are of international standards. Therefore, it is very important that we have the required institution to deal with these issues because without that, there is no way we can utilise the potentials of this country.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you for your attention and for giving me this opportunity to say these words.

**HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministers of Health, Fisheries and Agriculture for putting together such a very important Bill. When the Chairman of the Committee on Health and Sanitation was making his submission, he was well grounded on the issues of food and food related diseases in this country. We cannot over emphasise the importance of Food and Feed Safety Authority. We cannot also over emphasise the need to review and reintroduce tough

measures and tough laws relating to the handling and processing of food in Sierra Leone.

*Suspension of S.O. [5[2]*

**HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH:** As I was saying, in 1991 in Peru, Latin America, when the outbreak of cholera was spreading all over Peru, it affected that country economically and financially. The Health Sector was badly affected and thousands of people died of cholera. In Sierra Leone, we have experienced cholera and that was due to the way and manner in which we handle our food. Therefore, the creation of a Food and Feed Safety Authority is a step in the right direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the Chairman of the Health and Sanitation was saying, the way we package our food will attract international markets; the way we process our food will increase and enhance the revenue mobilisation of this nation, which is much needed. Our marine products is not making international market because of the way we handle our fish or our marine products. Therefore, if this institution is created, the European Union [EU] and other European markets will see the need for our marine products to penetrate the European Markets. As the Minister was making his presentation, he made mention of countries like The Gambia, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Ghana which have established Food and Feed Safety Authority. But the question is why are we are lagging behind? The time is now for us Sierra Leone to compete with other African Nations, so as to be able to reduce food borne diseases in this country. We have seen what happened in this country when the Ebola struck. Lot of lives were lost and we do not want another outbreak in this country. Again, when the mudslide took place, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation worked very hard to ensure that they chlorinate the water to prevent the outbreak of cholera. We were only looking at water related diseases, forgetting other factors like the way we handle food or the food that comes into this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are lot of expired food being imported into this country. Sometimes we buy food in the supermarket that is expired. There are no checks and balances at all. There is no agency that checks to ensure that the food that

is sold in this country is good for consumption. However, with this Bill, the law will now have tooth and they will bite any defaulters. People will now know that they cannot just bring substandard food into this country. Importers will now know that there is an Agency that regulates the type of food that is imported into this country, which is very key. This is because there is a saying that 'a healthy nation is a wealthy nation.' People are saying that our health system is weak and poor and I think these are some of the steps Government is taking to strengthen our health sector. Our health sector needs to be strengthened. We cannot just look at the medical aspect of it, but the the way and manner we process the food we eat.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join the Chairman of the Health Committee in encouraging my colleagues to see reason to speedily ratify this Bill before us. I thank you very much.

**HON. EDWARD S. JENGO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the need for this Bill, the Food and Feed Safety Authority to be enacted cannot be over emphasised. It is long overdue. The relevant Ministries and authorities have been yearning for it. Lots of meetings and deliberations have taken place to ensure that Sierra Leone transforms itself into a nation that provides safe food and food taken out of our country. People may want to concentrate on what gets out of our country, but I think it is important for us to also make emphases on what we produce locally.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will agree with me that we have lots of quasi-refineries around that are producing bitter kola drinks and other beverages. I was privileged to go on oversight at around the Willington Estate and we realised that most of these bitter kola factories do not have the required laboratories that gives them the mandate to produce these products. Again, the laws are so archaic that the fines are like telling them to go ahead. The fines ranged between Le15 to Le20. These are laws that were enacted in the 60s, but now with the enactment of the Food and Feed safety Authority, I think a very serious change is going to take place in the market generally that has to do with the food we consume.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as mentioned earlier, the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Fisheries and other key stakeholders have made tremendous efforts to ensure that they put this document together for the enactment of this Authority. A lot has been said by my colleague, who is the Chairman of the Health and Sanitation Committee. His presentation showed that he is a professional doctor and that Sierra Leone needs this Authority. My only fear is that this is not an Authority that is going to stand on its own and we have to be mindful of the responsibilities we give to it. I say so because if you look at Section 32 of this Bill, it gives power to the Authority to license investors. To me, it will make the service of the Ministry of Fisheries superfluous. It has too much power. We realised this when we gave too much power to the Road Maintenance Fund Sector. We found out that the roads that were constructed or the roads that were to be repaired were done at snail's pace because enormous powers were given to the Director General of that Authority.

**THE SPEAKER:** What Section are you quoting from, Honourable Member?

**HON. EDWARD S. JENGO:** I am quoting from Section 32 of this Bill.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Foday Rado Yokie, the Speaker is speaking and whatever I say here must not be challenged.

**HON. EDWARD S. JENGO:** Mr Speaker, I made special reference to that because at the end of the day, you want to render the service of the Ministry of Fisheries handicapped. Let us be mindful of the fact that when the Honourable Patso was a Minister, he did his best to locally generate income from the Fisheries and Marine Ministry. We thought that was the best until when the present Minister came. The question one may be tempted to ask is that if you have an Authority that is going to be self-regulatory and you are giving that Authority so much powers, then at the end of the day the Ministries will be there and would be paying their officials without doing their jobs. I think that particular side of this Act needs to be looked at very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said by colleague speakers. Though I have issues again to raise, I want to give my other colleagues the opportunity to do

their own part, so that at the end of the day when we get to the Committee Stage, we can make the necessary amendments. I thank you very.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Edward S. Jengo, I think the present Minister of Fisheries is doing remarkably well without bias.

**HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the Members of Parliament who were at the Pre-Legislative hearing and those who were not there, I will not want to go into the genesis of this Bill, though it will reiterate the importance of this Bill. It is worth stating here, however, that having a Food and Feed Safety Authority in this country is very important and this was discussed in one of the meetings in Brussels. Of course most of you will know that development issues are discussed out there by individual countries and at regional levels. So, when the issue of marine, fish and food safety was raised, we realised that most countries, both in the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa were losing out a lot in terms of what they export to the European Market and what they could get back into their countries in terms of revenue generation. Therefore, out of those discussions, it was discovered that countries like Sierra Leone and probably Guinea, that are situated along the coast are opportune to be by the ocean where we get lots of catch, to introduce the Food and Feed Safety Act in this country, so that we would be able to access the EU Market and even the Chinese or American Market and any other market because the world has expanded so much that if we do meet all those safety standards and regulations, we could take our fishes to any market that we so desire as long as it is acceptable by them. That is the genesis of this Bill we are discussing today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that we are a country that may have as much as we require, but not enough because we need lots of income, particularly foreign exchange. For us, it was necessary that we take the first step by getting into this activity with a consultant recommended by the EU. We should have a consultant because other countries had used the EU system in getting a consultant to assist them into putting their papers together or getting their Acts together to get their marine resources into the European Markets. Hence, we are where we are because of

those discussions we had in Brussels. But most importantly, it went beyond just what was seen in the Well of Parliament in Brussels to a point that I heard the Chairman of the Health Committee [which makes me really happy], saying it is not just that, but what goes out of this country as well; hence, the setting up of the Food and Feed Safety Authority. If this Authority is put in place, it is very pivotal for all of us because like the Chairman of Health Committee said, if we do watch what we are sending to the European Markets for it to meet their standards, it will generate income for us. We should also watch what is coming into our country to keep us safe. In spite of the fact that we are getting quality stuff from developing countries, we should make sure that they are good enough and have the quality that will keep us safe and give us the health standards that we need.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the pre-legislative hearing, the Minister of Health did mention that there were other sectors that were equally important to this Bill; i.e., the Ministry of Health, Agriculture and Fisheries, but honestly every MDA every single facet of this nation is relevant to this Bill. As a matter of fact, Parliament is more important in this Bill because we have to pass it. If Parliament does not pass it, it would not be a law. So, we are the most important people as far as this Bill is concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not going to belabour the point because most Members of Parliament have explained its relevance. However, I want to reiterate here that since we are going to set this Authority, I want to inform the Minister of Health, the Minister of Fisheries, the Minister of Agriculture and all other sectors that are involved in this that we put our heads together to make sure that when the Authority is established, the rules and regulations for safety and all other issues are enforced to the letter. This is because in this country, one of the greatest problems we have is enforcement, implementation and management. I am saying this without fear or favour. Those are the problems we have in this country and we need to work on them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we were at the pre-legislative hearing, we heard people from Njala University and from every other sector bringing their ideas. That was wonderful because we need all of those ideas together, so that the issues that

will be laid out during the Legislative Session will be considered; and when we shall finally pass this Bill, it will be to the benefit of this nation. Like what my colleague was saying, rotten chicken are being imported into this country. We also have salmonella eggs coming into this country and nothing is done to prevent it or to protect the people. If this happens, the essence of this Bill will not be met. I rest my case.

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to a very large extent, this Bill makes a whole lot of sense. We are fighting very hard to improve the quality of food produced in this country and also those imported into this country, but I am going to place a little bit of emphases in the area of multiple regulatory authorities. What the Minister seeks to do is to introduce an institution that is a multiple regulatory authority which means that a good number of Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs] would be expected to work together under this Authority. This also undermines the very important aspect of state governance. If the governance structure in this country developed a horizontal method of administration, then there would have been no need for this Authority. In this country, everybody wants to hold on to his own empire; and because of this, the need for coordination between ministries is always undermined. I remember when we had a debate some years back and the late Dr Sheka Kanu reminded this House that there was no need for excessive legislation. He was also reminding us that he had enough legislation to trigger the State ahead, but what was not present was implementation. Now, we have embarrassingly argued over the years, but I am satisfied that the Ambassador to the EU is here. Our fish and other marine resources from this country are not appreciated by the European Market; which means that over the years, we have lost lots of money because we have not been able to process acceptable fish to the EU Market. But if the story which I got from a friend in Senegal is true, then I can only say that it is a shame that it can even be suggested that fish from Sierra Leone is transported to Senegal, repackaged and sent to Europe to be marketed. In other words, it means that what we ought to have done in this Country is been done for us by other countries. I wish that is not true; but if it is true, I think that something ought to be done in that regard.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Chairman of the Health Committee eloquently made very important points about our sanitation system or the health of the ordinary citizens. And it is because of this I am very sure that the Ministry of Health is taking leadership in this venture. Like I said, this is going to be a multiple regulatory Authority and it will appear that health ministry is providing leadership. I am sure if you have asked Fisheries and Agriculture, they too would have wanted to provide leadership.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am pleading that the MDAs that are going to be part and parcel of this regulatory Authority must be seen and found working together as one united team. It is very important. We have tried over the years and some of us are old enough to know that. We came with quite a number of institutions to improve the quality of food in this country. In fact, I am sure that we will remember that when we were young, we had people from the health Sector who used to walk from house to house, trying to ensure that the sanitation within our environment was acceptable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of us could also remember that we had an enforcement system that was very strong in this country. If they go to your house and found you wanting, you will be arrested. I am saying this because we are being frustrated. I do not believe that we can continue to make legislations time and time again without effective implementation. One of my friends who is a journalist has made a point that we have so many institutions, Commissions and Parastatals that at some point in the future it would be very difficult for Government to pay salaries and allowances. But may I state here that this legislation is important and I am going to place a lot of emphases on the fact that we must try to penetrate the European Fish Market. That is my point of emphases, Mr Speaker.

Having stated that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at the other limb of this Bill; i.e., the drinks. We have sat in this country and allowed foreigners to come to this country to establish factories and produce very dangerous drinks. Today, some of our youths are mad. I listened to Dr Nahim on the radio the other day and he said to us that one of the causative factors for the madness amongst the young people was this new drinks introduced by these factories, like Pegapacks, Tyson punch, etc. I wish I

knew whether we had an effective monitoring system to make sure that those who are producing these dangerous drinks are put under control. I am sure the Oversight Committee on Health and Sanitation would have visited them to advise them on the production.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I sit down, I would want to congratulate the Minister himself and of course the Chairman of the Oversight Committee on Health and Sanitation who has made an eloquent submission this morning. His submission is a clear manifestation to show that he knows his area of study. And what I also want us to know is that even though we are going to introduce a very necessary multiple regulatory authority, we should also be certain that we do not end up like the other multiple authorities which we have created in terms of making sure that no one person dominate the scene. If you look at some of the provisions in the Act, it would appear that certain things which were handled by the Ministry of Fisheries cannot now be handled by the Ministry of Fisheries without clearance from this Authority. Mr Speaker, most of the things we need must be seen to be part and parcel of a system that will in future ensure that this Authority works together as one united team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for allowing me to make this little contribution and I also congratulate the Minister for coming up with this idea of introducing this multiple regulatory authority. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI** [*Minority Leader of the House*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from the onset, let me thank all those who in diverse ways [both from the public and the private sector, starting from the ministries that have been involved in the deliberations that led to this Bill; and other departments, agencies and also the private sector entities], that contributed to this Bill. We also want to thank our representation in the ACP-EU JPA and also our Ambassadors, especially the current Ambassador and former Honourable Member of Parliament and Chairman Emeritus of the PGA for all their efforts in terms of bringing us where we are

today. Indeed, the issue of food touches the very essence of human and none human survival. That is why I want to start my premise with several basic facts that is incontestable when it comes to food.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are what we eat. I mean our physical or our state of our wellbeing either physical, emotional, mental, spiritual is as a result of what we eat. It is very important. Secondly, in line with the issue of food, it is the mind that eat and not the mouth. What do I mean? If the mind tells you this food is for you, then it is food for you and you proceed to eat it. But if the mind says this is not food for you, and you should not eat it even though it is food for some other people. Therefore, food is cultural and the state of your physical wellbeing is important when it comes to food. That is why when discussing about food security, we make reference to the four 'As' [availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability. What we are talking about today; i.e., the Food and Feed Safety Authority, has to do with the acceptability. The food we eat must be acceptable. That means it must be safe; it to be eaten; and to be transformed into those nutrients to give us healthy mind, body and spiritually. It is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another fact, to a large extent, is that it causes morbidity. And mortality has to do with either directly or indirectly with what we take in as food. This is also very important. Now, we are talking about life-style diseases because of our lifestyle. These are diseases that are coming now that have to do with our lifestyle when it comes to food habit. It is very important. So, this is why some of us have associated ourselves with this Bill for quite some time and we have followed it and we will give it all our supports to ensure that we come up with a Bill. But this Bill is a means to an end and we should look at it from that point of view. It is a means to an end. What is the end? The end is for our food feed, including drinks and everything that is produced in Sierra Leone to access international market, not necessarily the EU Market because the EU Market is not only our trading partner, even though they are the most important trading partner, especially for Africa. But we also have America, China

and other newly industrialised countries who want our food to be processed in such a way that it is acceptable by international market. Therefore, this Bill before us is one of those conditions; and if we fulfil them in addition to other conditions, we are sure of accessing the international market, particularly our marine resources, which was initially the object for this project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, due to the fact that we wanted a holistic document without being limited to just fish because fish is not only the food we eat, but also even the water which is a basic element in all the food chain from production until the food get to your table. Mr Speaker, even the food we give to our livestock, so that at the end of the day the livestock become food for us, these are accessed in the international market. This Bill will ensure that food and feed coming into Sierra Leone is also safe for us to eat. Therefore, this Bill looks at both import and export, not only those that are coming from us, but also those coming into this country. This is because people have been given examples of how unwanted food is being dumped in Sierra Leone, thereby causing health hazard for the people. So, it is very important. To me, the importance of this Bill is that it serves the purpose for which it is intended. That is in addition to other modalities that we shall be putting in place or have already put in place that this Bill will now take us closer to the end; i.e., accessing the international market. It is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in terms of legislation, when we did the pre-legislative hearing, I did make a very salient fact that those legislations are as good as their implementation. You can have a good legislation, but if you do not want to implement it, it is a dead legislation. You may not have good legislation, but if the implementation is very good, then you can translate it and even use it as an opportunity to also serve the purpose for which that Bill is being promulgated. So, while we are talking about the merits of this Bill, the judicious, conscious, genuine and honest implementation of the provisions in this Bill is also very key.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I agree with the Honourable Member from Bo when she said that Food and Feed Safety Bill did not only rest with the Fisheries, Health Agriculture and the Water sectors, but every sector in Sierra Leone is related to this Bill. For example, how is the Ministry of Works related to this Bill? Food has to be accessible; and in assessing food, transportation is very important in terms of moving produce from their areas of production or areas of abundance to areas of deficit. We need good, fast and reliable transport. It is very important. We have seen instances where perishable foods like cassava or sweet potato got spoil by the time they were harvested and transported from the farm gate, especially when you have very poor road network. Mr Speaker, by the time those produce get to the market or the consumers, over **50%** or **60%** of them have perished as post-harvest losses. So, that is how the Ministry of Works is concerned with this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how the Ministry of Education is connected to this Bill? We need to know what good food is and what the ingredients of good food are. The Ministry of Education is also the one, especially for Agricultural University, providing the institution for teaching research on food. This is very important. We want to see that we have the laboratories, technicians and the scientists to ensure that the food we eat is good and it meets the international standards. So, this is how education is also related to this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also take the Ministry of Trade. We are talking about trade between Sierra Leone and the EU Market, Sierra Leone and America, and Sierra Leone and China. So, the Ministry of Trade is very important, especially as we are discussing the EPAS. Mr Speaker, by 2020, the old Cotonou Agreement will be no more because we will be talking about new agreement as to how we trade. What are the regimes under which after 2020 we shall be trading, especially Sierra Leone? So, it is also very important. We are going to have an open door policy during which we accept goods from other countries and we are also expecting them to accept our own goods. But again, we have to meet all of these safety issues. It is very important. The Ministry of Trade is also very important in all of these.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at how the Ministry of Youths is involved. If you go to the farms now, you will find out that our farmers are aging. If you are going to have abundant food to process and sell, then we have to also invest in our youths. Of course, if you go to the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs, whatever we say, Agriculture is still feminised in Sierra Leone. Most of our producers are women. So, you can now look at each and every MDA and see how each relates to the other. For me, because of the limited coordination and may be the quest for every Ministry to secure their own needs, I want to see in this Bill an inter-ministerial Committee that will meet periodically across all the ministries that I have identified to continuously provide the overarching policies with regards the directions that this Bill, especially in the implementation will do. But we will also want to see clearly, as we go to the Legislative Committee, to look at the roles and responsibilities of everybody in the implementation of the Food and Feed Safety Authority Bill. It is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to make sure that there is no role conflict or there is no role ambiguity. Where there is tendency for any to overlaps, we have to ensure that we work against those overlaps, so that everybody is clear about his/her functions. We also look at the competences before and now, so that everybody knows what they are supposed to do when and how and with whom, so that there are no overlaps or role ambiguity or role conflict. We want at the end of the day this Bill is implemented as we wanted it to be implemented. So, this is why some of us, during the Legislative Committee hearing, would expect everybody who has been at the forefront of this to be present. The Law Reform was given this draft Bill to look at it and they have come up with their own recommendations. I have read them and they are very good. However, they need to also discuss with the other MDAs and even the Standard Bureau. The Standard Bureau is also important in this Bill. We saw in the first day of the pre-legislative hearing a lot of work they have done, even though they are part and parcel, but they are still seeing a lot of gaps. So, for the ownership of this Bill, we would encourage everybody to come and further discuss this Bill. We should not say we do not have time to come. Let us use all the time we have, so that at the end of the day,

we come up with a Bill that is going to help us access the international market. We will also come up with a Bill that will protect us in terms of what we eat. So, it is very important, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a good Bill, but the Bill itself is not actually the Food and Feed Safety Authority, it is not the Authority we are really discussing, but a Bill on Food and Feed Safety we are discussing within which a mandate is given for the creation of the Authority. So, we have to look at the long and short titles of this Bill. We are not creating the Food and Feed Safety Authority. This is not what this Bill is about, but this Bill is about Food and Feed Safety with a view that we establish structures within the Bill to be able to take up the implementation process. So, I hope that this will be taken into consideration. Of course, there are also important entities, national and international that will want to sit on the Board when we come to the legislative and the Committee reading the World Food Programme [WFP] is very key in Sierra Leone in terms of food provision. We want to see them sit on that Board. We also want to see women and men producers, either institution that are defectively related in food processing to also be part of the Board. Of course, we would also be having some Scientific Committee made purely and solely of technocrats that will look at the scientific aspect of what we are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank everybody who has contributed to this Bill or has worked with us right through. We hope that after it goes through the legislative Committee, it would have gone through the necessary process and would come out shiny, so that it served the purpose for us to access our food in the international market and for us to internalise good and safe food in order for us to stay healthy, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually as a nation. They say show me the health of a nation then we will show you where that nation is heading. And for us to do that, food is going to be critical. I thank you and God bless us all *[Applause]*.

**HON. LEONARND S. FOFANAH *[Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business]*:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is one thing that we have agreed upon, both as Parliament and the MDAs concerned about this Bill; i.e.,

the Bill is necessary and is non-controversial. And since it relates to food, it has no doubt generated an interesting and spirited debate; not only from the authors, but from interested parties in our various universities. I have never known that we in deed have a lot of food specialists in this country. The Bill has generated not only an interesting debate and discussion, but it has also generated a lot of documentation. I am not sure I can easily recall any Bill that has come before this House that has developed so many documents from various sources. We want to thank all those who have contributed. Indeed, you have made our thinking very clear on the outcome of this Bill. We would also want to thank the consultant for analysing this Bill that is before us. We hope the same interest would continue to guide the development of this Bill, especially when it comes to the implementation process. This is because passing a law, like what the Minority Leader said, is not the end of it but the implementation process is extremely important. I therefore want to thank all those who have participated. They have travelled long distances to come and attend our sessions and I hope we are doing all this so that when the Bill finally becomes an Act, it will be able to provide the necessary guidance that will take us to the International Market. Once again I want to thank all the contributors, the consultant and the Minority Leader for the lecture we have received this afternoon. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**DR ABU BAKARR FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think I can only thank the Honourable Members of Parliament for the various contributions they have made to this Bill. I think the contributions were really wonderful and constructive. So, I want to thank them very much.

Mr Speaker, permit me to throw light on one issue from the Honourable Member from that end that has to do with licenses. I think I do not know how it got into the Act, but I think the intention is not for the Authority to license fishing vessels. However, we will address that at the Committee Stage.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai if I got her correct, she was suggesting that we include partners like FAO, WFP in the Board,

which is a brilliant idea because it can enrich the diversity in the Board. But from experiences, this international organisations are happy to support from outside, but uncomfortable to have their institutions incorporated in our statutory document. For example like a law that says FAO is part of a report they are not very comfortable because we had that experience with the NPPU. We did it in good faith, we tried to incorporate DFID because they are one of the biggest funders of the Health Sector in the Board, but they were not very comfortable with that. They interpreted it as meddling with our country's law. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker and Honourable Members for your kind attention.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, 'The Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 be read the second time.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Bill entitled the Food and Feed Safety Authority Act, 2017 being an Act for the establishment of the Food and Feed Safety Authority of Sierra Leone to ensure the safety and quality of food and feed in order to protect the public against health hazards to promote fair trade practices in food and feed and to provide for other related matters has been read the second time].*

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI:** Mr Speaker, I stand on 51[1] for this Bill to be committed to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Bill stands committed to the Legislative Committee]*

**HON. AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAIN:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Chairman of the Committee, I would crave your indulgence to meet on this Bill next Wednesday, at 10:00 a.m.

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 23. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is just an observation that I make every year on our roads and this is especially for the Committee on Works. As we are coming towards the end of the raining season, for those of us travelling to the provinces, either you are going from Masiaka to the Northern part of the country or from Masiaka to the Eastern part of the country. The visibilities on THE highways are getting poorer and poorer. Therefore, the safety of vehicles, pedestrians and road users is increasingly at risk. So, we are calling on the Committee on Works and the Ministry responsible for this Road and Safety Authority to please employ people to brush the highways to make it more visible, especially when you are taking bends and it is very difficult for you to see an approaching vehicle. Therefore, the office of the Clerk should take this information in the form of minute to the Ministry of Works, SLRSA and the parliamentary Committee on Works to ensure that they brush the highways, especially when we are approaching the dry season. The visibility is poor, the shrubs are very high and you hardly see approaching vehicles. That is the appeal I would want to make, Mr Speaker. I thank you very much.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 1:25 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017 at  
10:00 a.m.]*