



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 28TH MARCH, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



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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 Tuesday, 28th March, 2017.

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THE FINANCE ACT, 2017

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 28th March, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Fatmata Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers].

[The House met at 10.20 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 16TH MARCH, 2017

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8?

HON. FREDERICK S. SOURIE [RTD]: Mr Speaker, I want to look at Page 8. I spoke about the high cost of transportation from Makeni to Koidu and not from the other way round.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please take note. It is not be to and from his Constituency. There being no further amendment or correction, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary, held on Tuesday, 16th March, 2017 as amended?

HON. EDWARD STYLE JENGO: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

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

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 16th March, 2017 has been adopted as amended].

III. BILL

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE FINANCE ACT, 2017

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

MR MOMOH VANDI [*Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Finance Bill entitled the Finance Act, 2017 is still undergoing some processes. We have made major amendments and a lot of additions have been recommended by the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. Besides, the Minister of Finance and Economic Development would like to present this Bill himself. I am, therefore, asking this Honourable House to please postpone this sitting to a future date. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you have just heard what the Minister has said. Mr Minister we hope you will not spend too much time doing whatever you are doing. We are already in the month of March and we are moving towards April. Today is the 28th March, 2017. This means that the first quarter of the financial year is already gone. Therefore, we want you to speed up whatever you are doing. I hope the two leaders of this House have accepted the Minister's request.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI: Mr Speaker, I taught this Minister in school. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Sierra Leone is an active member of the Parliamentarians for Global Action [PGA]. We joined the PGA in 2003, under the leadership of the Chairman, Honourable Ibrahim Sorie, who was our first Chairman and is now our Ambassador to the EU. Since then, Sierra Leone has participated effectively, both nationally and internationally to the PGA. In fact, in 2011, His Excellency the President was awarded with one of the highest awards that PGA used to give, i.e., 'The Defender of Democracy Award' in Sri Lanka. Through His Excellency the President of this Republic, who is also a founding member of the PGA, we have been able to attend, in our large numbers, to the General Meetings of the PGA for many years until a few years ago when we have not been able to do so for reasons beyond our control.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some time ago, on a round table, Sierra Leone hosted the ICC and we had many Members of Parliament from the West African Sub-region. We also participated in the Round Table in Monrovia and this Parliament was gracious enough to give us a bus. We had the highest number of delegation to Liberia to attend the Round Table. It is our pleasure that we have been asked, as a Parliament

and as a country, to host the International Conference on Biological and Toxins Convention, which Sierra Leone was one of the early birds to have ratified and signed in 1976. We are here with Members of Parliament from twelve [12] African countries for the next two days, to look at the rate of signing, ratification and implementation of this very important convention of Biological Weapons, especially with the wars that we are now fighting not only in the Continent, but also in the world. The tendency for none state actors to lay their hands on Biological Weapons and Weapons of Mass Destruction is very high. In the last few years, those West African countries that have not signed and ratified are encouraged to do so. Our Mano River Union countries have signed last year and other West African countries. Therefore, it is our pleasure to actually welcome the delegates from Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Guinea and Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Namibia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Somalia, etc. We also have three of our staff from the PGA Secretariat in the UK, i.e., Peter, Tiago and Frederica from Kenya [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are happy and we want to inform this House that the two day Workshop has been very educative and informative. Yesterday, the UN Resident Coordinator was here. The Convention is older than all of us in this Parliament. That Convention was ratified in 1976 and none of us were here. So, it is new to lots of Members of Parliament; and therefore, we are reaching out to the UN Resident Coordinator and the PGA. We are just coming from the Attorney General's Office and also the Minister of Foreign Affairs because we want to organise important conferences on this important Convention, so that Members of Parliament will know about this Convention because we want them to cascade the information on that document to our constituents. This is very important for all Members of Parliament, especially with the recent history of Ebola. Ebola could be used as a Weapon of Mass Destruction or as a biological weapon. That could have wiped all of us out.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are praying that this Weapon of Mass Destruction, especially the biological weapons, do not get into the hands of anybody. Our peace keeping forces are currently in Somalia. Sometime ago, there was a threat

because Sierra Leone was participating in Somalia on the peace keeping mission. Sierra Leone was threatened by the terrorists. We are very happy in Sierra Leone for this workshop. Last night, the Deputy Speaker of this House hosted a sumptuous dinner for our guests in Lagoonda. The guests enjoyed themselves and they were very happy for this gesture *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked very assiduously, i.e., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that has been ferrying the guests from Lungi International Airport to Freetown; our staff and the PGA Members. We need to have a Freetown Declaration after the two day workshop. Some of them will be leaving today, but the rest will leave tomorrow. So, we want to welcome you again on behalf of the Sierra Leone Parliament, the Government of Sierra Leone and we wish all of you safe trip to your respective countries. I thank you and God bless us all *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Madam Minority Leader. I am sure the Leader will also want to say something.

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I stand here as Leader of this House, but most importantly as a founding member of the PGA. The few Members of Parliament who were here in 2002 would attest to the fact that I was one of the founding members, including the Minority Leader of this House. It is always a pleasure to welcome my colleagues here although I have not been able to attend some of those meetings, but on behalf of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, I know the Speaker is also going to welcome them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleagues for the achievements of this noble organisation. As a founding member, I want to welcome you and wish you travel mercies. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Mr Majority Leader. You were expecting me to say something. Fortunately, I said a lot yesterday and nothing is expected from me today. I just want to apologise for not been able to witness the dinner yesterday

because we had other official engagements. I am happy to learn that you enjoyed it and we hope that in future, even if you come on a personal visit, don't hesitate to visit the Parliament of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. We hope you will enjoy the few hours you have in Sierra Leone. As the Leader has said, we wish you safe journey *[Applause]*.

Honourable Members, at this juncture, I will adjourn the sitting, so that we can give chance to those who are busy with the conference to continue. We are hosting them and so we have to give them the opportunity to ensure that they get the most appropriate time they need to complete their work. In fact, Members of Parliament are very busy with the registration exercise.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 10.55 a.m., and was adjourned to Wednesday, 29th March, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.]