



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT
FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING
THURSDAY, 5TH OCTOBER, 2017**

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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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, 5th October, 2017.

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PROPOSER: HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF

SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE TENTH REPORT OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER, 2017

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.



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**

Thursday, 5th October, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:25 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. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 3RD OCTOBER, 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, 3rd October, 2017. As usual, we go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Yes, what page? What is it Alhassan?

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I was present on the 3rd October, 2017.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please have that corrected.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Thank you sir.

THE SPEAKER: Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? There being no other correction or amendment could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2017 as amended?

HON. ABU BAKARR KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. IBRAHIM KAMARA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2017 has been adopted as amended]

III. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF

SECONDER: HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA

HON. HASSAN B. SHERIFF: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone,

Tenth Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on parliamentary vetting of Presidential Nominations.

1. Introduction

Mr Ambassador and the Rt. Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, alive to its constitutional responsibility of vetting and approving of appropriately qualified candidates for appointment to public offices, met on Tuesday 3rd October 2017 and interviewed two Presidential nominees for appointments as follows:

- [i] Managing Director, Guma Valley Water Company
- [ii] Chairman, Local Government Service Commission

2. Procedure

Mr Ambassador and the Rt. Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee maintained strict consistency to its established procedure. Probing questions put to the nominees covered wide ranging issues relating to their educational backgrounds to ensure that they have the relevant education and the necessary backup experience to man such important offices of state. Further questions put to the nominees covered issues pertaining to their track records in other pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and their visions for a nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into.

3. Twelfth Sitting of the Committee on Tuesday 3rd October 2017

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominees were interviewed on oath:

i. Mr Bankole Mansaray, Proposed Managing Director, Guma Valley Water Company

From the lowly beginning of a classroom teacher in that noble profession, [1992 -1999] Mr Bankole Mansaray has, through hard work, steadily progressed to attain his life ambition. Mr Bankole Mansaray after leaving the classroom has served in the following capacities:

- [i] Banking Officer, Bank of Sierra Leone-1999-2000;

[ii] Head, Department of Research and Development, Anti-Corruption Commission-2000-2007;

[iii] Deputy General Manager, Guma Valley Water Company 2007-2012; and

[iv] General Manager, Guma Valley Water Company 2012 to date.

Reacting to the Committee's inquiries about the differences between his functions as a General-Manager and his proposed function as Managing Director, Mr Bankole Mansaray said, **"As General Manager, I was the administrative Head of the Company and I was appointed by the Board of Directors and I was accountable to them as Head of management of the Company. As Managing Director, I am appointed by His Excellency the President and my appointment is subject to the approval of Parliament. I will be both Head of Management as well as a Member of the Board of Directors. This position will provide me with a lot of authority in terms of implementing the plans of the organization and at the supervisory level. As General Manager, I was part of the Company and was subjected to the terms and conditions of service of the Company and all things being equal, I will retire at sixty. In the new position of Managing Director, I will be subjected to the terms and conditions of a contract to be signed by a supervisory agency. I will have five-year tenure of office that may be renewed subject to good performance."**

Commenting on his plans for the Guma Valley Water Company, Mr Bankole Mansaray said that his plans were an ongoing process. He stated that despite there were significant challenges at the time he took over the Company, a lot had been achieved and enormous progress had been made towards water supply in the Western Area.

Questioned on the issue of leakages and wastage of water, Mr Mansaray confessed that the infrastructures of Guma Valley Water Company were old and dilapidated. He informed the Committee about an ongoing DfID funded project of 38 million Pounds, which when completed will address the leakages significantly. **"This does not mean,"** he said, **"that we are going to sit down and wait until the DFID project is implemented. We are addressing the leakages as an ongoing activity. Honourable Members may have noticed that most of the leakages are**

deliberately caused by people who cut the water pipes to get water. As a utility Company, we consider that to be most unfair, but one has to be mindful of the fact that we are handling water. When people don't have water, they could become very desperate. I think it is our responsibility to manage the situation until such a time when we have an infrastructure that will adequately address the problem of the vulnerability in the system."

Answering to further questions, Mr Bankole Mansaray promised to make it a point of duty to supply water to this Honourable House of Parliament and the Western Area on a regular and sustainable basis.

ii. Mr John Bosco Kuyateh, Proposed Chairman, Local Government Service Commission

Mr John Bosco Kuyateh is a retired Custom Officer of the Sierra Leone Customs and Excise Department from 1977 to 2012. He is currently the President, National Basket Ball Association 2005 to date.

Responding to the concerns of the Committee on the issue of frequent transfer of Council staff which impede the work of the Office of the Auditor General and the Accountability Oversight Committee of Parliament, Mr John Bosco Kuyateh promised to put a stop to frequent transfer of Council staff. **"If I obtain the blessings of approval from this Honourable House, I will ensure that Council staff serve for at least a year before being transferred to another duty station."**

4. Recommendation[s]

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential nominees to be adequately qualified for their proposed appointments and are accordingly recommended to the House for approval:

- i.* Mr Bankole Mansaray, Managing Director, Guma Valley Water Company; and
- ii.* Mr John Bosco Kuyateh, Chairman, Local Government Service Commission.

Mr Ambassador and the Rt Honourable Speaker, Honourable Members, the Tenth report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the Tenth Report of the Fifth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. Signed
Hon. Hassan B. Sheriff Acting, Chairman.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed]

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Today, as the Rt Honourable Speaker himself would attest as a long time teacher, one of the expectations one would have, is to have qualified and quality products. This morning, I am privileged to have both nominees as my students and I am very proud of them. Mr Speaker, can I have your protection?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not mind them.

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have not said I am not an old man *[Undertone]*. I am indeed an old man because I am over 60 years now and I am proud of that.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, in the instance where the students appear to be older than the teacher, it is highly paradoxical. But that is not impossible not so?

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDOYOMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your kind intervention. He is helping me *[Undertone]*. Mr Speaker, I would not want to waste the time of this Honourable House in terms of recommending these fine gentlemen who are before us for approval. You have heard what the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service had said about them. They are adequately qualified for the various positions they had been nominated to serve. I think I need not even waste words on them. My only appeal to each and every one of them is to ensure that they live by what they told the Committee.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly advise Mr Bankole Mansaray to please ensure that water is always available in this House. We have suffered for water for quite a while now. In your own words, you have said that you would do everything possible to ensure that the House is adequately provided with water. We hope, as we leave this Well, we will find water flowing in all our utility rooms where we visit almost on an hourly basis.

For Mr Kuyateh, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think you have said it all. I am a Member of the Public Accounts Committee and one of the sore problems we have been facing with staff of the Local Councils you are going to serve, if this House approves your nomination, is the fact that those staff who work in Local Councils do not have time to rest and they are transferred to other Councils almost on a quarterly basis and this has affected the administration of those Local Councils. In most cases they leave no handing over notes for their successors. In other words, they are usually moved from one station to another without leaving records of their activities. Therefore, I want Mr Kuyateh to please ensure that he go by what he has told the Committee. I would also like him to use his office, if this House approves his nomination, to ensure that those staff stay in those Councils for at least two years before they are transferred. This involves the Chief Administrators [CAs], the Finance Officers [FOs] and the other senior staff members because these are the people who make the Councils move forward.

Having said those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the fine gentlemen are only waiting on this House to give them their nods. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity this morning to contribute to this debate. You all know that I hardly contribute when it comes to approval of people in this House, but I am doing so this morning because we are here this morning to approve a performer and a son of the soil. He is somebody whom his Excellency the President has made no mistake in nominating him to serve in that position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I may want to say that Mr Bankole Mansaray had been a teacher before he became a banker. He later worked at the Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], which is one of the most reputable institutions in this country, where he served as Head of Research and Development. After working for a couple of years, he came to the Guma Valley Water Company, where he served as Deputy Managing Director, Deputy General Manager and General Manager. Today, he is before this House because of the new legislation. This House could recall that a few months ago, we legislated the Guma Valley Water Supply Act, of 2017, which is changing the nomenclature of the job of Mr Bankole Mansaray from General Manager to Managing Director.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on many occasions in this Chamber, parliamentarians and other members of the public have complained about the supply of water in Freetown. I want to remind the people of this country that the Guma Valley Water Company has been encountering difficulties for the past years. The infrastructure of the Guma Valley Water Company has been very weak; and as Chairman of the Committee on Water Resources in this House, I have recommended to Government and even our development partners that in order to achieve a sustainable water supply in Freetown, we must support the Guma Valley Water Company in terms of overhauling the distribution network, which is now very old and archaic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Bankole Mansaray is also working with a system where people refuse to pay their water bills. As much as the individuals do not want to pay for water, it is also the same for the Ministries, Department and Agencies [MDAs] and this is undermining the work of the Company. If you look at the sums of money owed by institutions in this country since 2013 when we came to this House, you will be surprised. In 2013, it was **Le7, 000,000,000**; and today, we are talking about almost **Le20, 000,000,000** being owed by MDAs in this country. They are not paying for water, including Parliament [*Undertone*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about an institution that provides utility to the public. I have no doubt that Mr Bankole Mansaray, who this House will

approve this morning as Managing Director, will try very hard to succeed in running that institution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to also make a sketchy clarification on the supply of water to Parliament. I want to authoritatively state here that the supply of water to Parliament is not **100%** related to the unavailability of water. I have said it here times without number that the administration of this Parliament need to check the plumbing system. Sometimes we have enough water in our tanks, but the taps are not running because the plumbing system is faulty. I want to call again on the administration of this Parliament, the Clerk of this House to ensure that those pipes are repaired as quickly as possible if we want to see Mr Bankole Mansaray performs as expected. We want to see that all the taps are repaired for sustainable supply of water.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I may also want to call on Mr Bankole Mansaray to properly look at the new Guma Valley Act, the Act that is giving him this position today. I would also ask him to go all out to work with the Parliamentary Committee on Water Resources, so that we can popularise this new Act. It is very important because as you said in your statement that the behaviour of the public is also a hindrance to sustainable and efficient water supply system. And if you look at that Act, there are also penalties for misdemeanour and the public must be adequately informed about those provisions in Act. Therefore, I want to ask him to look at the Act and go to his office and perform as expected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about the other nominee. When he was asked about the frequent transfer of the Local Council staff, he stated that that has been a perennial problem for the Local Councils. If this House approves his nomination, I want to ask him to ensure that when once staff are employed and transferred to Councils, let it be at least 20 to 24 months before they are transferred to other Councils because that has always been the problem and excuses for the underdevelopment of those Councils. If you ask the FOs, the CAs and deputy CAs, they will tell you that I am just here for the past three months and I do not know anything about these transactions. This has greatly impeded the development of these Councils.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without much ado, I want to state here that we are here this morning to approve somebody who is not new person, but to change the title of Mr Bankole Mansaray from General Manager to Managing Director.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask this Honourable House to quickly approve the nomination of these nominees before us this morning. Mr Bankole Mansaray is a fine gentleman and he is a performer. I believe he will perform in that capacity as the Managing Director. I thank you very much.

HON. ABU BAKARR KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am not going to say much because the two speakers who spoke before me have said it all. However, I must state here that the frequent transfer of staff from one Council to the other is not helping these Councils. Again, I want to look at issues relating to FOs and Accountants. Most of the time when we visit these Councils, we found out that the FOs and Accountants are not that qualified to handle financial issues. Therefore, we want you to look into that issue because these are the most important personnel in financial management in these Councils. So, if this House approves your nomination, please go there make sure that you look into these issues.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would advise that the nominee for Local Government Service Commission work closely with the Minister of Local Government. So, if you work closely with him, I am sure you would succeed. Also, the regional offices in the provinces are not functional for the mere fact that they have not been empowered. So, make sure that you work closely with the Minister, so that you can set up these regional offices in the provinces.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency for nominating these two fine gentlemen. For Mr Bankole Mansaray, we have gone on oversight visit to Guma Valley Water Company and he has proved to be a performer if given the chance. He knows his job and I know that he would do what he promised.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask that we approve these fine gentlemen.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise this morning to lend my voice to the approval of the nominees before us. I am going to talk about Mr Bankole Mansaray. Mr Bankole Mansaray has been a fine gentleman and I want to thank His Excellency the President for his reappointment. He is somebody who is very passionate about transforming the institution which he heads. He is always ready to respond to your phone call at any time you call him. He is a man who has enormous respect for Members of Parliament; somebody who respects authority; and somebody who knows the needs of a Member of Parliament to respond to their constituents. I am saying this because we have so many heads of parastatals in this Government who would not respond because when Members of Parliament call them, majority of them failed to respond. But they should understand that we are representing the people and the calls we make are not unconnected to addressing the needs of the people. We are the people's representatives and they should always respond to the needs of Members of Parliament. They must respect Members of Parliament and Mr Bankole Mansaray has exhibited that quality before because whenever you call him on the phone, he is always swift to respond to your call. Sometimes if he is not available, he would respond in a text message that 'I will call you back.' And as soon as he finishes his meeting, he would respond to you and that is what leadership is all about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Bankole Mansaray is a leader in that institution and he knows the needs of people. He is doing well in that institution and any time you to the Guma Valley Water Company, you will understand that he is on top of situation. You would know that he is the right man in the right place, he has so much passion for the progress of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one thing I would want to state is the fact that there is so much water wastage in the city. I would like you to look into the leakages and wastage of water in this country. We need to pay special attention to it. We also need to look at the legislation and enforce the law against those who are cutting these water pipes. There are so much challenges in that regard and you have to do more if those

challenges are to be minimised. I know there are lots of challenges at the Guma Valley Water Company, but we need to pay our water bills for Guma Valley to function well. You need water and we need to pay for it. We also need to educate our constituents about the need to pay the water rate. Please, let us pay the bills, so that Guma Valley can function.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform Mr Bankole Mansaray that we are going to hold him responsible if Parliament does not get water supply because he has promised Parliament. I want him to know that our toilets are in a deplorable state because of lack of water and it is embarrassing for this Honourable House. Please ensure that we get sustainable water supply.

For Mr John Bosco, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate him in advance. The Chairman of the Committee on Local Government has reiterated that you need to ensure that administrative staff in the Local Government stays for a reasonable length of time. I want to congratulate you in advance and I am sure His Excellency the President nominated him because he knows you are capable. I wish you well once approved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with these few words, I want to ask my colleagues to speedily approve these nominees before us. I thank you.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI [Deputy Minority Leader]: I thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we all know, I am a Member of the Appointments Committee and I sat on the interview. We interviewed the two nominees. To me, they are both qualified to serve in the capacities that the President nominated them to Parliament. However, all I have to say is that we are way passed the eleventh hour. These gentlemen I would ask the House to approve because they are both qualified and they would serve in their various capacities with Parliament effectively monitoring their activities. Mr Speaker could recall that when he was Chairman of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, these Boards used to be called to this House over time to report to this House about what they have been doing. We used to monitor them by the Committee and that has not been happening since you became Speaker of

this House. I would urge this House to effectively monitor these Boards because once they are monitored, they will work effectively.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask that these fine gentlemen be approved. I thank you.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been ratified]

THE SPEAKER: Gentlemen, on behalf of Parliament, I wish to congratulate you most heartily and wish you well. Honourable Members, the Honourable Suahilo M. Koroma did say that Bankole Mansaray is a performer. He has made no mistake in saying that. Bankole Mansaray to me is one of the most ruthlessly efficient workers we have in this country. And as Honourable Rosaline J. Smith said, Mr Bankole Mansaray has tremendous respect for Parliament. I could recall when I was a Member of Parliament and then Leader of the House, each time I invited Bankole Mansaray to Parliament, he would come and each time Parliament asked him to do anything, he would do it readily. As we all know, Honourable Members, Mr John Bosco Kuyateh has also been a fine worker. In his own case, I think he has proved his mettle to the admiration of everybody. For some people who may not know, he belongs to the 'awodi ogeh society' and he is my 'oremi.' I want to wish them well *[Laughter across the Floor]*.

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

MR MOHAMED BANGURA *[Minister of Information and Communication]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on this Table of the House on Thursday, 28th September, 2017:

Joint Venture Agreement the Minister of Information and Communications representing the Government of Sierra Leone and WTS Media Group Limited in Care of All Trade Centre Service, World Trade Service Limited Liability Company, having its registered

Office at 32 Bower Hill Industrial Estate, Bower Terrace, Epping CM16 7BN, United Kingdom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me in brief to tell you the importance of this project. This project will save our country from the embarrassment of being suspended. Early last year, my Ministry attended a meeting in Geneva, wherein Sierra Leone was at the verge of suspension. There we pleaded to the International Telecommunication Union [ITU] and that suspension was deferred to July this year. July passed and the suspension finally came; and was also granted suspension up to December.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this project is so important to the people of this country that if approved by this House, it will serve the interest of this country very well, especially during elections. The importance of this project, if ratified, cannot be over emphasised. This agreement has the following benefits: if approved by this House, this Agreement would save this nation the embarrassment of being suspended from ITU; and it will give space for communication to be sold to broad band wireless. It will ensure better pictures and sound quality, and possibly new channels, extension of transmission coverage, extension of coverage in vernacular areas. It will also help to rebrand the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC]. We all know the status of SLBC as of now and it cannot be heard beyond Waterloo. But if this Agreement is approved, SLBC will be heard nationwide.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following agreement which was laid on the Table of this House on the 28th September, 2017:

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

[Question Proposed]

HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by passing a message from the Chairman of the Committee of Information and Communications, Honourable Benneh Bangura, who has asked me to inform Mr Speaker and this Honourable House that he is not keeping too well today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by congratulating one of the people who succeeded me at the Ministry of Information and Communications. I want to inform this House that the Agreement between the Sierra Leone Government and WTS must be seen as part of Government Public/Private Partnership [PPP] strategy. Most people know that in an effort to improve the governance of the state, both at the public and private sectors, introduced the PPP strategy in state administration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement is one more step to introduce a PPP, but of course, it has also been said that it is a joint venture. It is a joint venture because the Sierra Leone Government is going into partnership with a known company called WTS to begin to work towards the migration and introduction of a digital system in the telecommunication sector in this country. Somebody noted this morning that the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC] can be listed as one of the first broadcasting cooperation radio stations in the sub-region. However, I also want to state that when the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma assumed office, he decided that the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation must be the property of the people; and therefore, instead of restricting it to Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service [SLBS], which was dominated by just a handful of people. He thought it fit to convert that station into cooperation. Today, it is the people's property which allows civil societies, opposition party members, government officials and everybody to utilise that facility. But that is not enough. What we are saying here is that we are also part of the UN system and the United Nations at one point decided that most countries in the world should go digital. The migration of their systems from analogue to digital and this responsibility was

handed over to the International Telecommunication Union [ITU] of which we are a signatory.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, apart from Sierra Leone by 2015 it was discovered that many countries in Africa could not attain the deadline and because they could not attain the deadline a new deadline was created. The new deadline now means that in the next four or five months, if Sierra Leone does not go digital the possibility is that modern telecommunication facility would be shut down in this country and this explains why this is quite urgent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to state here that for those Members of Parliament who have attended the ITU meetings, the whole issue of migration from analogue to digital broadcasting has been a topical issue. As recently as one month ago, it was also a topical issue. What we do not want to see happening in this country is to find ourselves in a situation whereby we cannot attain acceptable migration. The great beneficiary in this effort will be the SLBC. This means that the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation will work together with Reuters International and other important communication entities to improve broadcasting in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, broadcasting in this country will not be restricted just to Freetown, Kailahun, Makeni and to Kabala. If it is properly installed and I am sure that it will be properly installed, it can go as far as Ethiopia, South Africa, etc. What the Ministry of Information and Communications is trying to achieve is to introduce a communication system or a broadcasting system that is similar to the Cable News Network [CNN], the South Africa Television and even the British Broadcasting Cooperation [BBC], which means that we should treat this issue very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to state here that even though the Government has accepted this as state policy, but one thing that is very important is the fact that the Government should have put in place all the necessary infrastructure to make the migration process possible. We need the necessary infrastructure to begin to move towards migration and the President, with his wisdom, gave instructions as far back as eight years ago that we must land the submarine cable in Sierra Leone, which

we did. And I want to congratulate the President for that bold move. He also said that digital migration should be seen as state policy and he also mentioned that the optical backbone should be installed in Sierra Leone. If you take all of these things into consideration, it is one step that is so required for us to begin to work towards migration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what will be the benefits for Sierra Leoneans? The benefits are just three; i.e., entertainment, education and national unity. This is because we have a say in journalism and also in telecommunication science that journalism can be seen as the centre of bringing all the people together. The harmonisation of all Sierra Leoneans can be seen together because the same news you hear is the same news I hear. If the President is on radio to night and he comes up with a statement, I listen to it and the man in Bo listens to it. Therefore, it is a harmonising system as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is necessary for us to look at it, but there is also the commercialisation aspect. Once we have installed this system or once we have migrated from analogue to digital, then money will be earned. In fact, one important market we are going to begin to look at is the Nigeria market. Once this system is installed, once Reuters have become part and parcel of this system, automatically we can take this system as far as Nigeria. They are already attempting to experiment it in Nigeria. We are not only going to experiment it in Sierra Leone, but we are going to expand it to Nigeria, Ghana and to other countries. This is the sense behind this Agreement Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said earlier, this Agreement is a historic one. Historic in the sense that it is going to modernise the telecommunication sector in this country and it is also going to improve on the broad band in Sierra Leone. If all of us work together, we will know, within a very short time the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation we are talking about can now be viewed in places as far away as Australia, Brazil, etc. It is possible because I know it is possible and we also want to make it very clear that the reason why we are bringing partners into this whole system is because

we want to introduce what we called best practice in broadcasting. To us, it is very important. I just said that the Reuters are going to be part and parcel of this whole process.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we agreed that this Agreement makes sense and we also agreed that the Government is aware of the fact that we should modernise the broadcasting system in this country. We also agreed that the broad band capacity of the state must be improved upon, which means that the Minister seated here will put in place all these structures to make it possible for all the players to be part and parcel of this whole process. Who are the players? One of the players is the SLBC; NATCOM, which is the regulatory authority and the IMC is going to give the okay for any broadcasting facility to operate in this country.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much and I hope that all of us will agree that this is a sensible Agreement and all of us will support it. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to say few words. Mr Speaker, you would agree with me that when contracts are signed by the Government, we are all blamed if it is a wrong contract. Some people would not have agreed with the contract, but because you are a parliamentarian, you carry the same burden as everybody else. I have looked at this Agreement and I am going to disagree with some of the things the Minister has mentioned and my colleague on the other side. If you go to articles 2, 3 and 4, that is where the Board of Directors are selected. We have been told by the Minister and my colleague that we stand a lot to benefit, but if you look at the ratio, which is 8 from the WTS and 4 from Sierra Leone, you will begin to wonder the kind of benefits we are going to get. If, for instance, they are going into voting, then it is likely that they will always vote against our interest. If we quantify that benefit in terms of percentage, **80%** will go to WTS and **20%** will go to this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, despite us providing the land for the installation, we will also be providing the manpower and that is stated in Clause 8[3]. It says Sierra Leone will provide network facilities and free land. Sierra Leone is going to provide

these facilities, but at the same time, the WTS will be gaining **80%**. Then what do we stand to benefit? They will be benefiting more than us. And if we look at Clause 3[5], it talks about geographical coverage and my colleague was talking about exporting it to Nigeria, South Africa and China. But if we look at the contract itself, it is stated that it will be provided for Freetown followed by Kono, Kenema, Bo and Makeni. Initially, there was no time limit, but if it takes two years, for example, for it to be exported to those areas, then it will probably take many years for it to get to Kailahun, if that ever happen. I do not think it will be taken to that part of the country because there is no electricity in that place. And this system will not work without electricity. As I speak, SLBC in Kailahun has to beg for petrol to fuel their generator. They do not even have electricity. So, how are we going to benefit in Kailahun, let alone the village I come from, Sokabu? I come from a remote village and even a vehicle does not go there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we look at the contract itself, it says over a period of twenty years. But let us go to Clause 11[1] and it reads: **"The WTS will still have all the relevant rights and licenses, even after twenty years."** This means that it could even extend to fifty years. So, it is like a continuous contract with no time limit as to when it will end. Therefore, I see this contract as a very bad contract. Also, Clause 11[2] states: **"The Government of Sierra Leone shall seize migration."** I am trying to state here that when we come to the income tax, WTS will be importing everything for free. In other words, WTS will not be paying custom duty levied on them and we are talking about austerity. The country has no money, but it is allowing other companies to import things without paying custom duty.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, WTS will be making **80%** profit if at all there is any. So, how do we expect this country to run when we are giving free concessions to foreigners? Also, the emphasis on the importance of this contract that if we do not sign this contract, Sierra Leone will be suspended and embarrassed at the detriment of our people's lives when a bag of rice in Kailahun costs **Le 250,000**; when a bag of onion in Kenema costs **Le 180,000**. I was listening to the radio this morning and the people were talking about the toll road. Mr Speaker, because of the Toll Road, a bag of onion

has increased from **Le 100,000** to **Le 180,000**. I will rather prefer my people to survive than to have a digital television which most people will not benefit from.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us go to the cost of subscription. The Agreement says **\$8** to **\$10**, excluding the Goods and Service Tax [GST], and other taxes. So, you can imagine how much that is going to cost. This Agreement, as far as I am concerned, is only going to benefit those who can afford to pay for it. It is only going to benefit the Government because I do not know what contract is this. It is only going to benefit the elite class, but it is not going to benefit the majority of people of this country, especially when the cost of living is very high. I think we should be focusing on education, health issues relating to women. Women are the most vulnerable group in every situation. How many of us have got a television? How many women are married to men who have enough money to even provide for the home? So, as far as I am concerned, this contract is a bad contract. I do not see how it is going to benefit us in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the only people who are going to benefit are those who have signed this contract and those in the United Kingdom. With these few words, I submit here that this contract is not good for this nation and it is not good for us because in most cases, the SLPP parliamentarians are often blamed; **“you are not taking brown envelope and you are not doing anything.”** And the worse of it all, they say we are part of the All Peoples’ Congress [APC]. I want to make it very clear that we are not part of APC, and whether we are part of the APC or not, if something is not good for this country, I, Honourable Navo Kaikai will not support it. I am sure most of us will challenge it. Thank you very much.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the interesting aspect of Parliament wherein we share knowledge, so that we understand better. My contribution would be in two folds. Firstly, I will just make some few corrections on the comments made by the Honourable Member from Kailahun before I come to the nitty-gritties of this Agreement. In the first instance, the Honourable Member from Kailahun made mentioned of land, but interestingly, the Honourable Member did not understand the input of WTS into Sierra

Leone. Mr Speaker, apart from politics, what I am about to say now is very much interesting and it will cost... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Mohamed Tholley, the Honourable Karifala S. Conteh is not speaking politics; and besides, he is an Engineer. Therefore, listen to him.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Presently in this country, the maximum cost of any transmitter in Sierra Leone cannot buy you an acre of land. The transmitter we are talking about is first of its kind and very unprecedented in Sierra Leone. I can tell you that the cost of that transmitter can get you over one hundred acres of land. So, if land is your issue, it is about a fraction of half town plot. So, in light of the cost, we are benefiting because they are bringing equipment that cost hundreds of dollars and we are talking about a piece of land which I can buy.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kailahun made mentioned of Kailahun, specifically the power situation in that district. Let me disclose that I did the installation in Kailahun. I am not being bogus, but to tell the truth. I connected the power of that station to the United Nation Advisory Mission in Sierra Leone [UNAMSIL]. So, I am the Architect of that work and I am putting it to you that this Agreement makes provision for a hybrid system. If you move around Freetown, you will realise that presently, the ones we have in Freetown are hybrid systems. You have solar being connected without any mechanical intervention and you get your power. So, this will be very simple for you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member also made a submission that we should be focusing on education, health and entertainment. I want to state here that if you come to Parliament, you have to read before you make any contribution. In other words, you have read to the Agreements before you intervene. Mr Speaker would attest to the fact the Honourable Member from Kailahun did not read the Agreement. To substantiate that claim, let me emphasise on three areas. Mr Speaker, if we could recall during the Ebola outbreak, there was a radio teaching programme and this radio teaching programme was done on television and radio as well. But interestingly, over **50%** of the population of this country was only getting that

broadcast on air. Those living around Freetown were viewing the teaching programme and the people I am representing in Wellington were not viewing, but they were listening. Now, imagine a situation wherein, you were listening and now you are seeing. If somebody is teaching you Mathematics on the radio, you are only listening without seeing anything. Now, if it is being televised, certainly you are going to understand better.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement makes provision for twenty television channels and two will be local. And now we have the right to have dedicated channels for dedicated functions. For example, the Clerk of Parliament may choose that because we want parliamentary activities to be aired out and we take 1 channel for Parliament. In our cities, it will be viewed; and if you go anywhere, it will be viewed. This is because the problem all of us are having here is that the people we represent are still finding it difficult to understand our functions and responsibilities. Therefore, if they see us debating issues on TV that will benefit them and that is typical of this Agreement. This Agreement is extraordinary because the benefits are enormous. When we had Ebola in this country, health centres were constructed all over the country and today... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Karifala S. Conteh, even the Honourable Bashiru is in Agreement with you.

HON. KARIFALA S. CONTEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, this is very important. Mr Speaker, if you go to buy goods and services, you pay all the bills in this country, excluding GST. If you subscribe to DSTV, they will show you the default payment which is indicated in this Agreement between **\$8** and **\$20**. They will even tell you that for this cost, you will have to pay GST for certain amount. Interestingly, it is this GST that increases the cost we pay, but it is no exception to this. This one is standardised; and for that reason, we are bound to pay GST because we agreed to pay. It is out of the GST the Government undertake development projects. I want to believe that the Honourable Member from Kailahun did not go through the indices. I read through the indices and I want to refer the House to Clauses 11[2] and 11[3]. If you go

through those two clauses, you will realise that the aspects of taxation and payment will be resolved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me briefly talk about entertainment, which is an area that is being neglected in this country. This Agreement makes provision for the entertainment industry of this country to go international. If you compare artistes from South Africa, Nigeria to those in Sierra Leone, you will realise that the artistes from South Africa and Nigeria are excelling far more than the artistes in Sierra Leone. It is not that our artistes are not intelligent and they are not capable. They are very intelligent and capable. The Honourable Veronica K. Sesay stands to benefit greatly from this because her films will go international if this Agreement is ratified.

In South Africa, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the South Africa Broadcasting Cooperation [SABC] is part of the DSTV package. In other words, there is a channel for SABC in the DSTV package and there is also a channel for entertainment. This entertainment goes international and our artistes in Sierra Leone do not have access to the International market. The only market they have is PZ. The access for you to go international is not there. When you do your song, your song will be broadcasted to either of these channels dedicated for entertainment and promoters in Nigeria and other parts of the country work towards developing the industry.

Honestly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know you will not permit this, but some Honourable Members are like doing marketing activities in Parliament when they do their videos and sell them to Members of Parliament, S.O 2. 'buy me video nor.' This Agreement makes provision for your video to go international. Therefore, that is the first phase of my contribution by way of responding to the Honourable Member from Kailahun.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of our constituents do not have access to television in this country. This is very serious. When we usually have State Opening of Parliament, there are people moving from Wellington to town to enable them view the ceremony. This Agreement completely eliminates all those errors. You will be seated in Wellington and viewing the ceremony and other Government functions. This will help in

ensuring accountability and the Rule of Law. Instead of using community meetings, everybody will be accessible to television and this is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not showering praises on the Minister because he is seated here, but this is unprecedented because he has been working very hard to ensure that we view government programmes on television from our homes. This comes into effect in February 2018, when we shall start viewing this on TV. So, instead of people going around crying about elections or the National Electoral Commission [NEC], you will have easy access in terms of viewing programmes on TV at home. In fact, there will be low number of court cases because the understanding will be great.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the SLBC. I want to state here that the infrastructure in this country will be improved and technical expertise will also be improved. How many Sierra Leoneans can handle digital communication well? The number is very small. This agreement makes provision for training of Sierra Leonean technical personnel at SLBC; so that if you go anywhere in this country, you will be comfortable. I could remember that the SLBC used to have Teleprompter. When you view CNN, you will realise that the person reading the news is looking at you directly. This is no magic at all. It is a simple technology call Teleprompter, which is at SLBC. But because of lack of expertise, they are not using it now. However, this Agreement will certainly ensure that our brothers and sisters at SLBC will be technically equipped to work in any part of this country and in any part of the World.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the benefits are so numerous that even the time for this sitting is not enough to discuss them. I want to thank you very much and to humbly call on all of us to speedily ratify this Agreement.

HON. JUSUFU B. MANSARAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo has said so much about this Agreement. He is knowledgeable in this Agreement because he has been a Minister of Information and Communications; and today, he is here as a parliamentarian to tell us what we stand to gain if we ratify this Agreement. For the Member of Parliament from Wellington, I want to state here that the Member of Parliament from Kailahun was only

performing her role as a Member of Parliament. She has her own understanding on issues. The Agreement we are talking about is for Sierra Leone and all of us will appreciate it for Sierra Leone. But when there are issues to raise and she has every right to raise them. We on this side are definitely going to support the Agreement and all of us will want Sierra Leone to be digitalised, especially the SLBC. The SLBC has had so many issues and you cannot expect a national TV Station not competing with DSTV in Sierra Leone. We pay so much to DSTV and we are not getting the required benefit. Few months ago, when the SLBC started broadcasting properly with clear pictures, everybody appreciated because they were moving ahead. If there is an Agreement to help the situation, no Member of Parliament or Sierra Leonean will ever go against it. So, we appreciate the Agreement, but we have concerns and such concerns are very legitimate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about the levies the Agreement is going to make. If you go to Clause 11[2], you will understand that even immigration is free. If you go to Clause 11[3], there are so many exemptions and those exemptions must concern to us as patriotic Sierra Leoneans. This is going to exist for ten years and after that period, we will start getting the gains. So, if we are reliably informed to get gains as Sierra Leoneans, we will appreciate it. Our concern is to focus on what we can get as Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will support this Agreement. We want to see Sierra Leone moving digital, but we have to make sure that this country is not deceived because if we are giving everything, let make sure by the next stage of this Agreement, Sierra Leone gains more. We are talking of 2020 and most people in this Parliament will not be in existence after twenty years. I am honest about that because we have older people in this Parliament. Therefore, I have concern about the timing and the percentage. If we are giving everything free for ten years, that is our concern, Mr Speaker. So, whosoever will be representing us as Sierra Leonean during the next phase of this Agreement should put Sierra Leone first. In other words, this country

must be our number one priority. And if a Member of Parliament raised that in her contribution, you should not criticise her.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I will like to talk about is the subscription fee, which is almost zero. It shall not be subject to any sale tax or any other similar tax. This is a very serious concern. If the whole Agreement is not advantageous to us, I wonder what we are doing here. Is it because we are desperate? If we want to move as a nation, believe you and me when you are drowning, you can even take a naked knife to just come on-board. That is what the Minister is doing because we want to see this country move forward. We should not forget that there is a tomorrow and we should fight very hard to ensure that we secure the future of this country for our children. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray, I might have agreed with what you have said. I would refer to the concerns raised by the Honourable Navo Kaikai as legitimate. But in his pontification, the Honourable Karifala S. Conteh attempted to reply to some of the issues raised, but nobody will castigate the Honourable Navo Kaikai here for what she said. I will not in fact allow that to happen. Incidentally, the husband of the Honourable Navo Kaikai was a student of mine.

HON. PATRICIA U. DANCAY BANGURA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to support the Agreement we have before us today. I just want to remind the House... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please hurry up.

HON. PATRICIA U. DANCAY BANGURA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me commend the Minister for bringing such an Agreement to this House. This Agreement is long overdue and I want to remind the House that not too long ago, when we debated the Finance Act 2017, we encouraged private investors to come and work with the Government to develop this nation. And all over the World, even in the US, it is more of the private sector investments that have built that country to where it is today. And Sierra Leone is behind and we are looking at the Public/Private Partnership that has

helped other nations to develop faster. The Minister, in his role and his vision, has seen that this is one step in the right direction by bringing this Agreement, which involves the Private Sector to develop our country. This is what we are all aiming at in this country and this is what we want as a nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, creating a level playing field for investors to come and invest, Sierra Leone will move towards the area where Ghana is because that is what Ghana has put in place. It is also what Nigeria and the first world countries have put in place. So, Sierra Leone is no exception. And with these directives from the Minister of Information and Communications, we need to commend him for what he has done. If other MDAs can follow sooth, we are going to develop very fast. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI [Acting Minority Leader]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have an Agreement before us this morning for ratification. As people usually say, sometimes when the baboon is swallowing the intrepid, it closes its eyes because either he is hungry or because the taste of it is good or palatable. It does not want to look at it or to be seeing it because lots of people refer to intrepid as poisonous, but it is sweet. The ratification we have before us today will not be supported, if it is not in the interest of this country. I am saying this because we belong to the club of nations like the United Nations and we are benefiting quite a lot from that system. It requires that we most transform our broadcasting system from analogue to digital. Yesterday, the Honourable Sidi M. Tunis informed us in Committee Room that he had to represent the Minister in pleading at their ITU Meeting somewhere in the Pacific all in the interest of our country. He made a promise to that organisation that we will go digital before the end of this year. We cannot afford to be left behind. I take courage in the fact that this Agreement will move us forward and give us the necessary support to move ahead as a nation. This will enable us remain among other nations. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also take courage because of the provision in Clause 16[4] of this Agreement. We are worried, but we should not be worried too

much because we can always have a way of revisiting this Agreement in the future. We should have that in mind.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must therefore ratify this Agreement in the interest of our country. In future, if any government has any problem with this Agreement, we will revisit it. However, for the fact that PPP is effectively been used in this country, it will give us the way forward to revisit all other Agreements that will be brought to this House. I am urging the House to ratify this Agreement.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH [Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken to this Motion, especially the Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai. He extremely and uncharacteristically contributed to the debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are in the 21st Century and the financial demands made on any government, not necessarily in Sierra Leone alone, are so huge and gigantic that no government can do it alone. The Honourable Member from Kambia has said that if these developed countries are going ahead today, it is because of the PPP. There is much more money in the Private Sector than any government can claim to have. And if governments are not sensible enough to actualise those resources and utilise them in the development of their countries, they are going to stagnate developments and the people cannot wait. If you see us taking these decisions in the eleventh hour, it is because it is for the good of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are not afraid because what we are doing is for the good of the people. We have brought the toll road; we have implemented it, although there have been a lot of criticisms, but we have done it for this nation and we will continue to do more. We are going to implement another toll road very soon. Here we are migrating from analogue to digital and Government is not putting a single cent in that project. The Honourable Member from Kailahun spoke about land. The land that is required for this project is less than one acre and that is not a matching price for the investors who are putting all their moneys into this programme. The other things that

the Government has to give are not again unique because this is not the first time that the Government is given exemptions of certain taxes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was pleasantly surprised that when I entered Parliament this morning, I found on my table Page 14 of this Agreement to be specific. When we attended the meeting yesterday, we were encouraged. The Minister has spoken about this Agreement. The technocrats of the Ministry of Information and Communications gave us lot of information about the advantages of this Agreement. We were very impressed because most of the things we did not know about this Agreement were clearly explained. In fact, there was representative from an MDA who said that if this type of system is adopted whereby, MDAs come not in the plenary but in the Committee Room to explain the purport of their Agreements, we will be in a better position and we would have a better understanding of every Agreement that is brought to this House. And because of the criticisms and the observations that were raised yesterday, Page 14 has been amended and signed already. Therefore, we are now discussing an Agreement that is removing the original Page 14 from the Agreement and replacing it with a new Page 14 that has already been signed by all the signatories in the Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to say that going forward in the future, we should be utilising the PPP procedure, approach and methodology, so that we have access to funds for the development of this country. We should inform our people when we go for election that henceforth, they should be contributing for the development of this nation. It is not always going to be free and that is the essence of development. If you travel to Togo, the Ghana Airways will always drop you because they will never go to Togo. They are not travelling to Togo very often and that is why they will drop you in Accra, so that you can use the toll road that Kwame Nkrumah constructed immediately after independence. As of now, they continue to pay for that toll road and it is over 50 years since Ghana became independence. That road is providing resources for them on a daily basis and they are using that to develop other roads. We cannot be seen not utilising the PPP in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all the contributors, particularly the Acting Minority Leader, who has eloquently supported this Agreement before us. I thank you very much and I want to recommend this Agreement to the House for ratification. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr MOHAMED BANGURA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must take this opportunity to thank Members of Parliament for their brilliant contributions this morning, especially the contribution made by the Honourable Navo Kaikai. The questions you asked are relevant and we are definitely going to take them into consideration. I want to assure you that as a Ministry, we will put the country first. I will also like to thank the Honourable Jusufu B. Mansaray and the rest of other Members for their contributions.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on 28th September, 2017:

Joint venture Agreement by the Ministry of Information and Communications, representing the Government of Sierra Leone and WTS Media Group Limited [Care of World Trade Service Limited], a Limited Liability Company, having its registered office at Bower Hill Industrial Estate, Bower Terrace, EPPING CM16 7BN, United Kingdom.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Government Motion by the Minister of Information and Communications has been ratified]

HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand this afternoon on S.O 23 and to give you this brief information. I want to state here that Parliament has been my political home for 15 years. In that regard, the 14th and the 15th October, 2017 have been slated by my party to elect or select the flag bearer. As I stand before you, therefore, I believe and people have said it that I am still viewed as the strongest man in the race in terms of integrity, maturity and political astuteness. Therefore, through you, Mr Speaker, I want to implore this Honourable House not only Members of Parliament, but also the entire staff of this House to pray for my success and for God to

touch the hearts and minds of our delegates or our Chairman and Leader in the course of making this wonderful decision for our Party. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12:25 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 10th October, 2017 at 10 a.m.]