



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION - FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 11TH JULY, 2019

SESSION – 2019/2020



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 11

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 11th July, 2019.

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V. GOVERNMENT MOTION:

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENTS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 11TH JULY, 2019:

[i] FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING FOR REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

[ii] AGENCY AGREEMENT INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING FOR REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

[iii] TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK [ISDB]. CONCERNING REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

[iv] LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK [IN ITS CAPACITY AS THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT] REGARDING REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 11th July, 2019.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:20 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY 4TH JULY, 2019.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [*Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move a Motion to make a slight amendment on the Order Paper in order to add item B [v] and [vi]. The added item "**B [v]: FINANCING AGREEMENT SECOND PRODUCTIVITY AND TRANSPARENCY SUPPORT GRANT AGREEMENT POLICY, FINANCING BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION DATED 21ST MARCH, 2019** and Item **B [vi]: AMENDMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN FIMAB SIERRA LEONE LIMITED the DEVELOPER AND THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT [IPAM] UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE, THE UNIVERSITY – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY BUILDING CONTRACT DATED 2ND AUGUST 2018**".

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of urgency, the first four documents that will be laid, will be ratified today and the last two that I have just added will be ratified on our next Adjourned date. Thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion for the amendment of the Order Paper of 11th July, 2019 has been carried]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Pages 1 to 4? 5? 6? Can a Member move?

HON. BRIMA MANSARAY: I so move Mr Speaker

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday 4th July, 2019 has been adopted]

III. PAPERS LAID

CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON MINES AND MINERAL RESOURCES

HON. EMERSON S. LAMINA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have the privilege at the same time I am humble to lay on the Table of this House the Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources for the First Session on the topic: FIRST SESSIONAL REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON MINES AND MINERAL RESOURCES ON THE ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE MINISTRY OF MINES AND MINERAL RESOURCES AND RELATED AGENCIES AND MINING COMPANIES.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in accordance with **S.O. 18[7]** in tandem if not in concurrence with Section **170[7]** of Sierra Leone's 1991 Constitution, I beg to give a synopsis of the Report before laying. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in line with **S.O 18[7]** and Section **170[7]** of the 1991 Constitution, I lay the Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources. *[Applause]*

[B] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

JACOB J. SAFFA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of Parliament the following documents:

[i] FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING FOR REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

[ii] AGENCY AGREEMENT INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING FOR REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

[iii] TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK [ISDB] CONCERNING REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

[iv] LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK [IN ITS CAPACITY AS THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT] REGARDING REGIONAL RICE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

[v] FINANCING AGREEMENT SECOND PRODUCTIVITY AND TRANSPARENCY SUPPORT GRANT AGREEMENT POLICY, FINANCING BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION DATED 21ST MARCH, 2019.

[vi] AMENDMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN FEMAB SIERRA LEONE LIMITED THE DEVELOPER AND THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT [IPAM] UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA LEONE, THE UNIVERSITY – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY BUILDING CONTRACT DATED 2ND AUGUST 2018.

IV. BILL

THE SEXUAL OFFENCES AMENDMENT ACT 2019

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

PRICILLA SCHWARTZ *[Attorney-General and Minister of Justice]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I Move that the Bill entitled: The Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019, being an Act to Amend The Sexual Offences Act 2012, to make provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment; to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for the prosecution of offences under the Act; to make provision for the making of rules by the Rules Of Court Committee, to further regulate the practice and procedure under the Act and to provide for other related matters, be read the first time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled: The Sexual Offences [Amendment] Act 2019, has been read the First Time]

[SECOND READING]

PRICILLA SCHWARTZ: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I Move that the Bill entitled: The Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019, being an Act to amend the Sexual Offences Act 2012, to make provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment; to make

provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for the prosecution of offences under the Act; to make provision for the making of rules by the Rules Of Court Committee, to further regulate the practice and procedure under the Act and to provide for other related matters, be read the second time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the statement for the declaration of rape and sexual violence as a National Emergency dated 7th day of February, 2019. His Excellency the President, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, directed among other things that:

A special division of the High Court be created to deal with cases of rape and sexual violence, sexual penetration of a child be punishable by Life Imprisonment, rape and sexual violence shall be tried in the High Court without any previous committal for trial in the Magistrates Court.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, subsequently, the President by Proclamation published in the Gazette declared that a State of Public Emergency exist in the whole of the Republic of Sierra Leone with effect from the 7th day of February 2019.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice in collaboration with the Chief Justice, the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Members of the Sierra Leone Bar Association are taking appropriate legal measures to implement directives of the President and to curtail the prevalence of crimes of sexual violence committed against women, girls and babies throughout Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed amendment to the Sexual Offences Act 2012 that is before you, is necessary to curb the prevalence of crimes of Sexual Violence committed against women, girls and babies throughout Sierra Leone. The Amendment of Sections **6** and **19** of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 increases the penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from the current maximum penalty of fifteen years to Life Imprisonment and it is intended to serve as a deterrent to sex

offenders. The amendment of Sections **13** and **19** proposed of the Sexual Offences Act 2012, to introduce the following new offences which are: Aggravated Sexual Assault, an alternative Conviction of Aggravated Sexual Assault is intended to discourage crimes of Sexual Violence. The amendment of Section **42** of the Sexual Offences Act 2012 is intended to make provision for

The prosecution of offences under the Act; and

To make Provision for the making of Rules by the Rules of Court Committee, to make rules to further regulate the Practice and Procedure under the Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I Move that the Bill entitled: The Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019, be read the Second Time.

[Question Proposed]

HON. ISHMAIL S. SANDY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the enactment of the Amendment of the Sexual Offences Act 2019 is so necessary and crucial that it needs not to be overemphasized for the simple fact that it has to do a lot with the realization of the Sexual and Reproductive health right of our women.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is an open secret that the women of Sierra Leone for so long have suffered in the hands of men who are not supposed to live on Planet Earth. To see a man sexually penetrating a toddler, five months old girls or babies is worrisome. In fact, to me, such people if possible should have come in the 17th Century. As a Sober-Minded Government, a Right-Based Government, a People-Centred Government has prioritized the putting in place legal framework that will guarantee the right of all sectors of society and that is what we are doing today as the people-centred government, the right-direction government, the right-based government, the people-centred government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I sometimes ask myself especially when I was in the Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO] world specifically engaged in Women's Rights programming, I could remember there was a time I was managing an Access to Justice of women's Project, I had a lot of interactions with survivors and even perpetrators and

the conclusion I made within the course of my engagement was that we had inadequate Legal Framework to ensure and guarantee the rights of our women. To see these two responsible Ministers, the Minister of Social Welfare and the Minister of Justice taking this bold step. I am of the opinion that every sober-minded Member of Parliament seated here will support the enactment of this particular Amendment. If only you are here serving your people, if only you are related to a woman, if only you have a wife, a daughter, a mother, you have an aunt and a sister, you should be thinking of supporting this particular Motion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the sake of time, I just want to call on my colleagues to see the need of supporting all morally minded people of society in the enactment of this Bill. I thank you all. *[Applause]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Sama, you have the Floor.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Thank you Mr Speaker. For me Mr Speaker, this Amendment is necessary because we have heard in the news of men violating children that are under five years and I am sure this Amendment will help to curb such crimes. All reveal books have condemned illegal sex. I see this Amendment as a Legal Framework that is going beyond the purpose of protecting the child. This Amendment is assuming that, when we talk about sexual penetration, we are saying here that if any person causes or you penetrate another person without the consent of that other person is an offence. Mr Speaker, this Amendment should also make Provision in the future for the protection of the boy child. Mr Speaker, I know a friend who told me a story that, at the age of seven years a lady forced him to penetrate her and the lady was over twenty years. Now if you look through the Bill, in several areas it is mentioned that if you penetrate another person. What about if a person causes a boy child to penetrate her? You know, we have to look at that as well. It is not only about protecting the girl child; we also have to protect the boy child. There are a lot of people, probably people in here who have been victims of people forcing them to penetrate them. Please, as it is bad for somebody to penetrate a girl child so it should be equally bad for an adult to cause a boy child to penetrate her.

THE SPEAKER: That is quite interesting Honourable Member. Honourable Member, I am sure the Bill covers all of that but it is interesting to think about a lady forcing a boy child to penetrate her.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Mr Speaker, it is happening.

THE SPEAKER: I think the erection would mean consent. Is that not so? *[Laughter]*

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Not Necessarily so.

THE SPEAKER: It is okay, carry on Honourable Member.

HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA: Okay. It is very important that we should also protect the boy child. Maybe, we may not do it now but in the future Amendments we have to look at that very carefully.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also have another concern. In as much as we have to punish sexual offenders, we should take certain issues into consideration. If you look at Section **19** on page **3** of the Amendment which states: ***A person who in any sexual manner, coerces or physically forces another person, to engage in any sexual act, including any form of sexual violence, drug facilitated sexual assault, groping or torture, commits the offence of aggravated sexual assault and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not less 15 years.*** This Section is not exempting husbands and wives Mr Speaker. Now we have to be very careful, what if there is a misunderstanding between the husband and the wife and the husband or wife thinks of punishing the partner then claims that he/she was forced to be penetrated? We have to look at that. If we are to imprison the husband for 15 years, who will pay the school fees of the children and if the husband is the bread winner who will provide for the Family? So, by protecting the child you are also punishing the child. So, I think Mr Speaker, we have to be very careful here. Now, here is a man and a woman who has had sex severally but because of some misunderstanding the lady would claim that the man forced her. How is the law going to look at that? What sort of evidence is needed? We have to ensure that the right decision is taken by the Courts. We have to be very careful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again, we cannot say husbands or wives are exempted. We have to protect the human person to ensure that nobody forces another person to have sexual intercourse but we have to be careful that, it is possible sometimes there is malice between a husband and the wife and a bad husband with a bad wife who thinks that this is the only opportunity I have to punish my partner may claim that I was raped. So, we have to be very careful. In a situation of that such, if the husband is sent to jail for 15 years minimum who will pay the school fees of the children? Therefore, I want to suggest here that the Courts ensure it is proven beyond all reasonable doubt that the actual act of Rape occurred so the victims do not go to jail unjustly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to use this opportunity to caution we the men. We have to be very careful. A child is not just somebody below five years. The Law defines a child as any person who is below the age of 18 years. So, we have to be very careful. In short, what this Bill is saying is we have to stop illegal sex. We should stop illegal sex because if you are to go to Jail for 15 years then your life is lost. Some of these girls you think they are 20 years but they are only 17 years. So, we have to be very careful. The Law is saying a girl below 18 years cannot give consent even if she says yes. The Law is saying that no consent was given so we have to be very careful because going to Jail, for some of us who have gone to Jail, even spending one hour in Jail is a very serious problem. So, we have to be very careful, we have to avoid these girls because the Law is not going to say the girl gave her consent. As long as the girl is below 18 years you have violated the rules. So, you have to be careful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was at the Pa Demba Road Correctional Centre and I discussed with inmates. Sometimes we sit down in the evenings and discuss. In such discussions, we ask each other the reasons for our incarceration. It will interest you to know that there are a lot of people who are in Prison for sexual penetration. I was at the Correctional Centre with a certain Professor who was living alone, he said he had issues with the neighbours and there was a girl who used to go to his house to help him with some work and one day the mother claimed that he had penetrated the

girl. So, it is not advisable if you are alone in the room or a house to allow a girl child below 18 years to stay around you because it is possible that she may go somewhere else where she could be violated sexually or beaten up and it happens for you to have misunderstanding with the mother of the said girl child, somebody would say I saw that girl coming from the house of that man and you would be in trouble. For what I know about the Police, when you are accused they will take statement from you and the next thing is to lock you up in the Cell. Whether you are guilty or not, you are going to be detained in the Cell. So, I am saying this, this Bill is very important and it is also dangerous for us the men. So, we have to be very careful. Do not stay alone with a girl child in a house who is not your child. You have to always ask the girl child to go away because there would always be somebody who would testify that he/she saw the girl child coming from your house and that makes you a suspect and if there is some malice between you and your neighbours, you are prone to be victimised. For the fact that you go to the Police and somebody says I saw that girl coming from his house, even if you are going to be free at the end but you would be locked first in a Cell. So, that is my advice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want the Law to look very carefully at the area between husbands and wives. Sometimes the wife may claim that my husband forced and raped me as the Provisions in this Amendment Bill makes it possible for a husband to rape a wife and when that happens, then some other person sharing the house with you would testify by saying I heard the lady shouting stop pulling my legs, stop doing this, stop doing that and some Magistrate or judge may take that as a proper witness or evidence against you. So, if for example the husband is found guilty and the husband is sent to jail for 15 years who is going to pay the school fees for the children?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think this Bill is very good. My District Pujehun, we are on record to be the poorest District in this Country and the incident of sexual penetration is also very high in Pujehun. So, I am sure most parents in Pujehun will be very happy for such an Amendment because we need to protect the girl children.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to state this. In the Quran, the most serious offence is when you add a partner to God. You cannot compare God to any person. To even say I was very smart, if I had not taken that decision I would have been in jail by now it means you are adding partner to God. Your intelligence did not prevent you from going to jail, your intelligence is not responsible for your success and success comes from God. Therefore, to claim what belongs to God is like adding partner to God.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next set of serious offences in the Quran is illegal sex which is really very serious. Adultery is a key offence, it is even very serious. Murder and adultery are all in the same category. This Bill is trying to save humanity. According the Provisions in this Bill, if this Bill had come about 10 years ago or 20 years ago, most of us who are talking now would have been in jail because how many of us here who are not guilty of having forced somebody to have sex? Mr Speaker, this is very serious, if you have been attempting you have to stop it now. The women here can bear witness; they have been saying enough is enough. When somebody says I am not able you have to leave that person alone, when somebody says I do not feel like you have to leave that person alone. You do not have to physically touch anybody or you push or pull the person apart. They are saying the human person should be respected. Do not force anybody for sex and avoid the girl children.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with that, I rest my case here. We the men we have to be very careful. I Move that we accept and approve the Amendment. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Hassan Sesay, you have the Floor.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of sexual violence is one that I am sure all of us in this House and the population at large will want to address and make sure that people who commit crimes of that nature against our children are punished to the maximum. Of course, the issue of violence against women has been one that we have been fighting for the longest time in this Parliament and we will continue to give support to such issue. We have no

issue about that on this side of the House. Now, certain areas of concern were included in the original Bill that was brought to Parliament but I am sure the respective Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs], the Line Ministries, the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs etc. have done extensive work in consultations with other stakeholders to ensure that areas that were not captured are now brought into this Bill to make sure that we make sense out of what we actually want to handle here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think one thing that I will advise here is for us to look at the document and ensure that the recommendations made from the consultations held form part of the holistic Bill that will come to this House for final approval because like I said, we have no issue with the curbing of Sexual Violence but in the process we must also be careful not to have this Bill used by other people for reasons that are not intended by the drafters. I think those are the areas. Like my colleague from Pujehun was talking about other issues, I will not say it in the way he was putting them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are certain areas but I am sure like I said, through consultations with stakeholders some of those areas have been captured but have not be included in the past Bill. So, I think after discussions here we will see reason to have this Bill sent to the Legislative Committee to fine-tune it and to make sure that all of the things that have been captured by the stakeholders are included for the Plenary Session here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one area that I was thinking about is we have minors. Any girl under 18 years is a child and every boy under 18 years is a child and we have laws that prohibit the imprisonment of children. Now let us look at a scenario where a 16 year old boy commits a sexual offence with a 16 years old girl, two children and one committing a crime against the other. Now, if a situation of such arises what is the Amendment Bill saying about that? I am sure the Stakeholders must have raised that issue because I have been in certain meetings where those issues have been discussed but since they have not been captured in the Bill I think those are areas that

must be looked at because if that kind of a crime is committed we must ensure that the boys and the girls are protected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are also other areas that needs to be addressed. Like I said, women, with all due respect when angry can do things out of anger and regret later. I think, sometimes when somebody react in an angry mood and when reasoning prevails, the consideration might be different. So, I think all of those things must be taken into consideration here when we look at this Bill because it is a very serious issue. Of course, I have no question about those people who violate underage girls of 7, 8,9,10 years I have no question about that. Such goes without question because it is a sickening offence. So, those ones we do not have a problem with. However, where adults may sometimes want to use it to unjustly punish people because even the wife can accuse a husband of rape it can happen and when that happens we must make sure that those men are adequately protected by the Bill so that like I said earlier on it will not be used for purposes that are not intended by the drafters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, unfortunately, it is only now that we are getting here the documents that are coming from the consultations. If we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee, we will have enough time to have all of these consultative recommendations included and make sure that when it comes back to the Plenary here, we would have done justice to it and everything would have been captured. Therefore, in as much as we have no problem with the proposed Amendment Sexual Offences Bill, I think Mr Speaker, with the consent of the House; I suggest that we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee so that more work will be done before it comes back to this House. So, that we will do justice to the issues and make sure that when once it is done we know we have completed it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are other aspects of violence against women that we need to address but those will be for another Debate. Like the issue of Child Marriage which we are supposed to look at. Also, how do we harmonize the Customary Law and the National Law to ensure that a girl in the village is a child just like a girl in

the Urban area is a child i e all of them are below 18 years. There is a caveat which we have all be looking at, I am sure when we get to that we will Debate that but those are all areas that we have to talk about. I think one time, I engaged a very professional Draft man on that; he will give his own advice on such issue. So, I think those are all areas we have to look at when it comes to violence against women because our aim is to protect the girl and our women. All of these are what we are willing to hear.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in as much as we will support the proposed Amendment Sexual Offences Act, I will Move that we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee so that more work will be done to make sure that we get a holistic document in this House. I thank you very much [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Williams-Lamin, you have the Floor.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a special day. A special day in a sense, I have spent 40 good years in my life of dedicated service to children in Sierra Leone and in different parts of the world serving children. Today we are talking about Sexual Offences Act against children. During my studies at the University College of London in the Faculty of Institute of Child Health, Great Hormones Street Hospitals, I heard about a word call pedophile. Pedophile was not a common word in Sierra Leone at that time. This is over 20 years ago. Pedophile means men who find interest, who find love in children, who molest, who pretend to be friends to children at the same time they exploit them sexually. This is a very sad issue. Little did I know that it will be a spill over effect to my Country I love so much. Over the years, I have been able to contribute to over **50 000** children in different parts of Sierra Leone including the Constituency of my colleague seated over there which is Constituency 050 of Tonkolili District. I have worked with various institutions in doing that and we need the children to come on board as they are the future of Sierra Leone, they are the future of the world at large but again I realize that in the very Country that we are serving these children, we have people here who find pleasure in disturbing the children's future, who find pleasure in having sexual engagement with them. It is very sad.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, I stand here in the capacity of a father of 8 daughters that I have biologically and adopted ones. I stand in the capacity of a father for over **50 000** children I am dealing with. I stand in the capacity of a founding member for Organizations who have been instrumental in the of promoting children's rights precisely the Programme for Children Sierra Leone which has been in existence for the last 15 years in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on this note, I stand to support this Bill. I stand to support the Bill because it is of national interest, it is a national issue, it is a moral issue, it is about the future of Sierra Leone and it is about the integrity of Sierra Leone. Even this morning on the Society for Radio Democracy 98.1 FM, there was news about sexual offence against a child. Why are we doing this? Where is our manhood? Sometimes I feel ashamed to be a man because of the offences committed by my fellow men who have found themselves in this very sad situation. Is it because of mental illness? Maybe we need a psychiatrist who deals with mental issues. On that note, I will appeal to my colleagues to really give media advice to our brothers who are engage in the continuous perpetration of rape against our future leaders of this Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not only about the offence they commit in this Nation but they are putting Sierra Leone in the Global Sexual Offences Register and it is of grave concern. It is not an offence one can take lightly because everywhere you go in the World, people knowing that you are coming from Sierra Leone where they had amputated each other hands and now penetrating babies, it would be very embarrassing. This is a very sad event happening in our Nation and we need to focus, we need to stand firm in curbing it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have had many people saying, what about the fifteen years or sixteen years old boy who is been forced to penetrate but have you ever thought about your daughter? Have you ever thought about your sister for somebody behaving to her in such manner? Have you ever even thought about somebody touching your hand in an unacceptable manner? I think it has to go also with a cultural issue because we like to touch. I have seen men touching the buttocks of

women, I have seen men touching the breast of women and it is immoral, it is wrong to touch abruptly. Allahuakbarr! May God be our saviour. We have seen that and we believe it is a common practice. The other day a young man in a garage said to a girl **"mi wef"** [Quoting S.O 2] and the girl responded by saying **"u nor to mi husband oo na book na e na mi husband"** [Quoting S.O 2] I felt so good about the girl. At her age she was very firm and uncompromising by saying no you are not my husband my husband is my book.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the girls who have adopted the Western culture, I think their mode of dress is wrong, inappropriate and not in line with our culture. The issue of material wealth is also disturbing our girls. They want to be always dressed throughout their lives. How can we manage this one and how can we do this? They also organise chill outs and form different Social Clubs. One day, a particular Social Club went to my area for a chill out and after a moment all the lights went off. I really took the bull by the horn and I said this music has to stop and all of you should move from this place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have to take into consideration if we want to achieve the Free Quality Education the manner in which social activities are conducted, how we conduct our after school or picnic entertainments but again I want to caution the men to very disciplined content. I have earned a lot of resources from contentment, I have accommodated people. At one point in time even my own bed room was rented to somebody a Canadian woman. As beautiful as she was, I rented my place to her and I went off. You should have confidence in yourself; you have to be able to control yourself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, men have to come to Europe to see some women bathing half naked but you dare not look at them twice, you only look once and go mind your own business. It is embedded in us as men to be attracted to naked women but in Europe you cannot look twice. I think all of you who have been to Europe have seen that. You are not there to touch, you are not there to even look but in Sierra Leone this culture of touching, this culture of my wife has been a norm.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, today, I stand on behalf of my Consistency which is **081** and my Organisation I have named Programme for Children Sierra Leone to appeal to Honourable Members of this noble House for us to enact this law in order for it to come into existence in the Republic Sierra Leone. I thank you Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao, please let us hear the voices of women now. Please, after we hear from three women I will then give you the Floor. Honourable Neneh Lebbie, you have three minutes. After Honourable Neneh Lebbie, Honourable Catherine Tarawally will take the Floor and you have three minutes please.

HON. NENEH LEBBIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, with the time that has been given to us I think I will just limit myself to the generality of the issues because we have held several meetings with regards to the Amendment of this Bill. The Law has been in existence for all this while but now like our President during the State Opening of Parliament made that pronouncement we know that he was very passionate about what he said because that has come to fruition. He promised in Paragraph **123** of his Speech during the State Opening of Parliament that he will pay more attention to these sexual offences in this Country. We have now seen that, we now know that we have started the process of the Amendment and I am sure the punitive measures will be added to the satisfaction of Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time when I was part of a programme at the Miata Conference Hall, I saw my sister the Minister of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, she was so emotional on that day when all of us listened to a documentary of some of these sexual offences in this Country. Believe me if you were there you would have shed tears too. I cannot imagine why some men can be attracted to children of two, five months, one year old and so on. My concern here is about toddlers. They destroy these children for the parents. It is very sad and disheartening. As a parent, I know that this Bill on behalf of my Constituency, Constituency **086** in Bo District, as I have consulted my Constituents several times on this issue which they are in favour of although with some recommendations is a good Bill. They have

recommended for further Amendments because according to some of our Constituents who are legally minded people have come up with issues and these issues some of us have noted them down in consultation with some other Civil Society Organisations [CSOs], we have some of these issues here, I will not read any one here now because I know that this Amendment is really very serious and we want to make sure we add the voices of the people we serve. Therefore, I will leave this perhaps to the Legislative Committee so that some of us will send some of these recommendations to them for the future because sometimes people say when you are sad do not make any decision and sometimes do not even make some statements when you are very happy. So, when you hear some of these stories you become very sad and you may want to even take stringent measures, more measures than even what His Excellency the President has pronounced. The last time, when the Proclamation was made we heard some people well I do not want to give them any terminology for now because I do not know which category of people they belong. When that Proclamation was made, some said: *[S.O 2] "Boo den pikin den ya na den dae fos dem sef pa wi, den kaind dressing den ya"* but what about the child with pampers, what kind of attraction will that give to you? What kind of pleasure will that give to you? So, there are a lot of things we will consider when the proposed Amendment Bill come to either Committee stage or when it goes to the Legislative Committee but the generality is, the people of this Country want this Amendment. Let the punitive measures be added at least to see if with all these punitive measures particularly with the Life Imprisonment the perpetrators will continue the way they are doing. Even with the Proclamation that was made, believe you me Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people still went on perpetrating the same crime I cannot imagine. Therefore, it appears as if people want even more punitive measures than those that are been pronounced here. So, that is just the generality. I will leave the others because it is like this particular Amendment will go to the Legislative Committee. I want to thank you very much for your attention.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Catherine Tarawally, before you say anything I want Honourable Members and the general public to address their minds to this whole

question about sexual penetration of children. I strongly believe that this is not ordinary; there is something somewhere about this whole thing that we have not looked at. In fact, at a point I started entertaining this idea that there is some form of ritual thing going around this issue which we have not seen. There is something ritual about this whole thing. It is not just about sexual penetration of children and so on. I am beginning to address my mind to this kind of situation. So, for Members of Parliament and of course the general public, I think we need to begin to address our minds to this kind of possibilities. At the end of this Debate, I will urge an Honourable Member to Move a Motion of invitation of both the Inspector General of Police and the Director of Crime Management at least to tell us something as to whether they have been making efforts to ensure that they go to the root of investigation regarding this particular issue. It is very serious, we need to go to the root of some of these offences probably we would know that there is something wrong about this whole thing. There is something we need to know. Honourable Catherine Tarawally, you have the Floor.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, you just made mention of two people, the Inspector General of Police and the Director of Crimes Management but I being a Human Rights Officer all my life, the Correctional Centres Officers have the stories. After the culprits are been remanded and sent to the Correctional Centres, the Correctional Centres officers would interrogate them they would tell them the real stories. So, let us bring the Correctional Centres Director, let us interrogate him and ask him to help us with information. For me, I believe it is the blood of the virgins that is very much needed.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, let them tell us something. There is something ritual about this whole thing.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Let them tell us something. You can proceed.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I am very much happy. This is what we were saying when we were at the Bank Complex that, for

us having a State of Emergency is just minimal but for us to look at the law, review the law and Amend the areas of concern makes sense of what we are here for and this is what makes the sense of that we are here for Mr Speaker *[Applause]*. We are here to put seriousness into what our people voted us for. Reviewing some of these Sections make things work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I saw certain Sections which the Drafter made mention of through the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, like Section **1, 6, 19** and **42**. Even though, yesterday, in the Consolidated Meeting, they made mention of other Sections but for me Section **37** is very important. Even though, the **G** part of Section **37** was made mention of Madam Attorney General and Minister of Justice, let us look into the compensation of the Sexual Offences Act of 2012. The compensation is very minimal Madam Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Mr Speaker, if you go down to Section **37[2]** of the Sexual Offences Act of 2012, the Parent Act, it tells you about the compensation of the psychological treatment. It is that area I want to touch on. Let us do not just pay attention to the act of penetration, the rape and leave where the trouble comes from. The trouble comes from the Economical Violence, it comes from the harassment that has been made mention of in the three Gender Acts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you peruse the three Gender Acts, thank God you are a learned man if you peruse it properly you will see the problem. The three Gender Laws thank God the Senior Drafter is here has a very big problem Mr Speaker. In the three Gender Laws, I want to make mention of the Customary Marriage Act. Mr Speaker, the Customary Marriage Act is a problem. Let us try to look into the problem of the Customary Marriage Act and try to synchronise the Customary Marriage Act with that of the Sexual Offences Act which we are about to Amend. You cannot say the age of consent is **18** years whiles the three Gender Acts say a child within the age of **14** years can enter into marriage if the parent agrees, not even just the parent but the uncle, a church member or a faraway person. So, where are we? This is the loophole the Lawyers are taking advantage of and this is the problem why the lawyers are

always freeing the perpetrators from the problems of Sexual and Gender Based Violence [SGBV]. We cannot stand here and have Laws Amended without making mention of all these problems. So, if we are really serious, if we are a serious Parliament, we should look into the registration of the Customary Marriage Act and synchronise the Customary Marriage Act with this particular Amendment we are about to make.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should also look into the compensation for psychological effect. The psychological abuse is a problem in Sierra Leone because and that is because of poverty Mr Speaker. So, for those reasons Mr Speaker, I am of the conviction that sending this particular Bill back to the Legislative Committee will do us well, will do our people well and will do this Nation good. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I think at this stage I wish to recognise the presence of the Minister of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs and the Solicitor General of the Republic of Sierra Leone who are all here in support of this particular Bill. Can you please rise. *[Applause]* you are welcome. Honourable Loloh Tongi, you have the Floor.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Wow! I say wow and I am taking a deep breath because I am thinking that today is a day, today is a day for us the women of this Country. Gone are those days when men would sit down together and decide for us. I remember my grandmother told me she got married when she was 5 years and the first time she saw blood was when she gave birth. This is to tell you that, that child who was my grandmother was abused when she was probably 7 years. The man forced her to have sexual relationship. She could not actually tell me this but I remember my mum when we sat down she always advised me not to follow boys and these were the stories that were coming up and today I think about them, I think about them because those days are gone, the time is up. Your time of pleasure is over and I am advising those watching us through the television and probably it might go on media that you should desist and that those perpetrators must be judged and punished. This has to stop.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am from Constituency **001** and that Constituency is almost at the end of this Country. A lot of girls have been raped in my Constituency but with this Law I am sure we are going to bring the cases up. These are girls who have been raped by their teachers because they could not afford to pay school fees and they would drag them somewhere when they refused to have sex they were raped. The cases were in Kailahun District Police Station.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was in Bo yesterday to be part of this review process and I added my own recommendations that when these people are sentenced to Life Imprisonment let there be no pardon from the President. We can pardon some other crime perpetrators but not perpetrators of rape. I also recommended that there should be a limited time for investigations. How can a woman be raped and then you take five, six, seven and eight months investigating the said matter? This has to stop. We should give a limited time for investigations because by giving unlimited time for investigations, that would give a look warm flavour to the whole processes of investigations and at the end bribery would have occurred to kill the cases. So, I actually made those recommendations and I was applauded by almost everybody. Those are the thing we have to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us talk about the victims as well. When a woman is impregnated or a small girl is impregnated due to the barbaric attitude of these men, what happen next? Most of those children are suffocated during their birth. This is prevalent especially among the Fulani people I know over there. They hang themselves, they commit suicide. So, if an Act like this is enacted by us particularly in my existence before I die, I will be proud. I am proud today to be a woman, I am proud today to tell these men that the days of impunity is over as most of these men when they rape these girls they threaten them, they go to the parents they threaten them and when you go to the Police nothing will come out of it. I am happy we are part of this Amendment process. We are happy because we the women are called on board to sit with the men together and decide for us the women because this is all about us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, I am actually appealing to all of us here to go to our Constituencies and sensitize these young and adult men especially the School Teachers because they are the vipers in our Provinces. They do these things without been punished, without even been asked because they think it is acceptable. So, I am really very happy today to stand before you all here to ask you to go down to the Constituencies and sensitize our boys because we would not like them to go to jail for fifteen years. Mind you, by the time you go to jail for fifteen years and come out you would be nothing anymore. So, let us make it a point of duty to go to our Constituencies and sensitize our boys, to tell them that when you commit an act of rape, you will go to jail and you will go to jail forever. So, please join me to make this Sierra Leone that we love so much a better place to live so that outsiders would be proud of us. Let us do not refer to them the way the white man refers to them as pedophile. The white man refers to them as pedophile but we will refer to them as mad people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much and I wish this Act to be enacted. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Bernadette Wuyatta Songa you have the Floor. After her, Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara will take the Floor. Please you have three minutes each.

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is an important thing we are doing here today. If we are to demonstrate the seriousness we have as a Parliament and as a Country, we should focus on certain issues that have not been dealt with. Sierra Leone, we have not got shortages of laws, we have plenty of laws enacted in this Country. What we lack is the implementation of the laws and follow up on the implementation process in order to ensure that the laws we have enacted are actually working. We also lack the culture of evaluating the laws. We do not do these in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we stand here as parents and people representing our Country, as people representing our Constituents, we think of what we

can do to change the scenario, what we can do to change what has been happening and one of the issues that we look at is catching them young. We concentrate on girls but we also have to focus to the fact that boys are being sexually abused in this Country. We have boys who are sexually penetrated in this Country and they face the worse problem as children because they do not report such acts against them. For the boys, they do not report but girls are very quick to run to their parents or family members to report these acts and that is only if they feel comfortable to report them because we have a culture where parents do not believe their children and therefore, children have not got the confidence to come to their parents to say this has happened to me. We as parents need to imbibe the culture of believing our children; we should build our relationships with our children so that our children would be confident to report these crimes. It is only after we have done the aforementioned then we start addressing the issues surrounding rape.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I looked at the proposed Amendment Act which aim at addressing the issue of penetrating children in schools, as a Member of Parliament, my Constituency is seriously affected with this issue. Most of the girls are impregnated in schools and it is the teachers who impregnate them. You would also be surprised to know that the Heads of the schools are more responsible of committing such acts than the junior teachers. After the children are been impregnated by the very teachers, they are driven out of school and they do not go to school anymore. For the Catholic schools in my Communities, when you get impregnated, you cannot come back to those schools and the children become dropouts. The Amendment is looking at what can be done to bring these people, people in positions who are committing such crimes against our girls to book. What can we do to ensure that they are punished because children are also afraid to name these people?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this also happens in work places not only in schools. In work places, we have bosses who are harassing women sexually and the women are afraid to bring up these issues because they are afraid not to lose their jobs. These are issues we need to look at.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we look at the issue of sexual penetration or we look at Sexual Offences, we have to look at the root causes, the contributing factors and the after effects of such offences. One of the after effects my colleague Honourable Catherine mentioned is the psychological effect. We have children who are abused when they are young and when these children grow up what do you expect them to be in communities? They are going to be offenders; they are going to be people who continue to commit the same crime that had happen to them because they feel it is normal. Do we have to look at the psychological impact of children been abused or children who are been brought up in broking homes where people believe that brining up children as single parent is normal? Though, it is normal to bring up children as single parents but the environment in which you bring up the children would impact on how the children behave when they become adults. We have to look at the mental state of these children. If we do not look at the psychological status of these children, they will grow up to become people who we might not want to remember in our Communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Amendment Act should aim at also addressing a very important issue which is how do we protect our victims when they are abused. If we have to do justice, we have to look at areas of this such. Only last month, I have two victims in my Constituency. The first one is an eight years old girl and the second is an eleven years old girl. For the eight years old girl, by the time I went to my Constituency on Friday, they brought her to me to say she is been abused sexually and that she could not sit or walk for a week. The moment she started walking, her mother said to her she should start schooling. Is it because the mother does not understand the psychological impact on that child or is it because the mother has not spent time to look at how that act has affected that child? When I probed into it properly, the offender has ran away from the village and the offender has a wife and children in the same village. What do we do to people like this? He is still on the run as I am still following up that case. He is on the run whiles the family is there in the village. He has three children who are girls but he did not abuse them, he went on to abuse another

person's eight years old girl. The law has to look at what to do in instances of this nature. He is communicating with his family, but he is still on the run.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second victim was an eleven years old girl who was abused and taken to the Kenema Hospital by her parents and the Hospital asked the family members to pay money before they could see this child. I have to bring it to the knowledge of the Social welfare Officials who happen to be in Segbwema at that time, coincidentally, the same time I lost my father. They straight away made their way to Kenema to intervene in the matter and I believe it was addressed. What do we do in instances of this nature where evidences and children should be accessed freely but people or families are been charged a fee to pay? So, there are a whole lot of issues that we have to look at if we are to make these laws effective. The Sierra Leone Police are structures we also have to look at. I have to go to my Police Officers and say to them, if you do not follow up on these two cases I am going to take it up. I asked them for the Report and they said they have a Circulating System to which they send them. I also asked them for a copy of the Statement and they refused to give me. So, how do you follow up to ensure that a particular rape case is been picked up? The system is not working; we need to review our system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the social workers, we have institutions that are open for children but there are no monitoring systems in place. What are these institutions doing to these children especially the girls? I have an Institution in my Constituency, it is an orphanage for girls and the workers in that particular Institution abuses the girls sexually. The Institution is not monitored. An individual came and open the Institution as an angel. Well done to them but what is happening in there is unknown. What is the system doing to ensure that such issues are reported? All the girls who are in that particular Institution have aborted pregnancies twice or thrice. I also brought it to the attention of the Deputy Social Officer who immediately visited that particular Institution, took statement, I am not certain what the instructions were but from what I know, the workers who were present there were asked not to work till the investigation is done. These are some of the things as Representatives we need to

pay attention to, such as the institutions in our Constituencies and the children in the schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I challenged a teacher who is now running to be a Principal in a particular School and this particular teacher has impregnated a child in my Constituency and I said to them over my dead body will that teacher be a Principal in this School. I have not got evidence about the alleged incident, I only got a text message from the girl sent to me on three occasions when I was on vacation in London. I picked up the matter, I visited the school and I spoke to the Principal. The Principal said to me it is a lie but five girls from the same school the said teacher is dating confirmed the same incident to me. Now, what do we do? This is an incident I have reported to the Police but they have even not invited the teacher to make statement. Therefore, we need to monitor the system and we need to monitor our Constituencies to know what is happening there. Without considering these issues, we can make these laws but they will never be effective in our Communities. We have a responsibility to ensure that these matters are followed up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I looked at the proposed Amendment Act, it also focuses on women. The evidences that are presented, my colleague was talking about how women can maliciously accuse somebody either the husband or anybody having a relationship of rape. I also want to add to that. Whilst we are looking at or questioning whether the evidences are real, we also have to look at what the possibilities are because a woman, for what I know would not stand in public to say I have been raped when it is not true. I am not saying it does not happen, what I am saying as a woman is that, I would find that very difficult to lie about something that has an impact on my reputation as a woman.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, If we are here today looking at this Law, let us realise that the implementation lies on us. The office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice and the Minister Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs are doing their bits. What have we done or what can we do to ensure that they are successful? What can we do to ensure that this Country succeeds in ensuring that such

laws are implemented the way we want them to be? Yes, there are changes in our Country; we have children who have been abused by their own fathers and these children need protection, they need our support, they need our confidence and we need to reassure them that, they have the self-esteem which they need. Incorporating them into the system is so easy for Sierra Leoneans but we need to put systems in place that will ensure that there is a counselling for the victims. We have to counsel these children before they go back into their Communities. Now, what happens to the men who commit these crimes and bribe their ways out? There is bribery going on in this Country which we cannot deny. Men bribe their ways out of these situations and they are out of it in less than no time. What happens to the future of these children and when they go back into the Communities what have we put in place to ensure that they are fit back in the Communities like any other children to continue their normal lives? We have a responsibility as mothers, as sisters and as women which is to ensure that our children are safe. Let us build our relationships with our girl children to ensure that they feel free to come and speak to us about issues affecting them. Let us learn to trust them so they would realise they are prioritised by their parents and they would know that their parents would believe them. We need to have a society free of monsters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, so far, we have been concentrating on the physical health of Sierra Leoneans, let us now focus on the psychologically health of Sierra Leoneans because the men who are committing these acts are sick mentally and they are not normal *[Applause]*. Let us look at how we can address the psychological wellbeing of Sierra Leoneans. It is only with that we can have a Sierra Leone free of such monsters. I thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara, you have the Floor. After you Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao will take the Floor.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here not just on behalf of my Constituency but I stand here on behalf of my compatriot Sierra Leoneans because the issue of rape or sexual violence is not just limited to my Constituency and it is not just limited to children or women. As a

woman, I stand here as a potential victim of rape, I stand here as an indirect potential victim of rape because I am a woman and I have a girl child. We have men here who have women and they have children who are girls. All of us have stake in this particular Proposed Amendment Sexual Offences Act. When you look at the Act, there are a lot of gaps. Yes, I agree but I believe we cannot look at all of those gaps all together; we have to look at the gaps that are very important and the crimes that are perpetrated presently in our Communities. Kono District is one of the Districts that has the highest number of rape cases because it is a Mining District and a Cosmopolitan District that invites people from different backgrounds to go and find for their livelihoods. In the process, they will get in touch with women and they will get in touch with girls, especially the girls who go to the mining sites to sell. A lot of these crimes have been committed in Kono and a lot of victims have died in the process and today, there is no justice for the victims. Some of the victims are from the villages; they do not have money to come to Koidu or Freetown to pursue their cases. If today, we are reviewing or amending some portions of this Sexual Offences Act, I am one of the persons who is very happy but that is not all what happens after the Amendment is done is also my concern.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, yesterday, I happened to chair the National Consultative Meeting in Bo, where women and Civil Society Organizations that were invited from different Districts came together and I was there together with the Minister of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Commissioner of the Human Rights Commission, the Paramount Chief of Bo, the Chairman of the Council of Paramount Chiefs of Bo District and the female Honourable Members of Parliament were also present. The female Honourable Members made a statement of assurance to the people of this Country that if this particular Amendment is Passed in this House, we will not just sit down here as female Honourable Members of Parliament but we will join the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs to go down to the least village to ensure that this particular Proposed Amendment and the entire Act is popularised. Many a time when you ask people in my village in Yokordu about this Act, they would

say, we do not know about this Sexual Offences Act. So in fact, the people would just be committing the crime because they are not knowledgeable about the offences and the accompanying penalties. So, we as female Members of Parliament, the Caucus, we will be one of the teams that will go down to the Provinces to really sensitize people and tell them not to conceal any case of rape or sexually penetration. The reason been if we continue like that we would be killing the future of this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, I stand here as Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara, maybe I will come for my second term, maybe I will not but these children are coming up. We need people who can replace us and we need women who can replace us. We are now fighting for the **30%** of affirmative quota but we also need these gaps to be filled. We need the human resource. If the human resource is been tampered with at a younger age, how could they go through education in order for them to come and stand where I am today? It is the responsibility of all of us not just the women, it is also not just the responsibility of the fathers but even you uncles, aunties, grandfathers, neighbours you all have a responsibility. It is not only for us to Pass this Bill into Law but to ensure that men who are wicked, who have no conscience to stop what they are doing. I know they practiced all of these happenings during the war and during the war a lot of things happened and some people took pleasure in that and they are continuing with that up to date. A lot of crimes are perpetrated in our villages which the cities or District Headquarter towns are not aware about because the services are limited.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whilst we are amending this particular Sexual Offences Act, let us also talk to the Government especially the Ministry of Finance. In our last budget discussion, I highlighted the small amount of money been allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. When you look at all the functions the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs is supposed to perform then you look at the quantum of money been given to them, you will realise that the budget it is not equivalent to the functions they are supposed to perform yet still we want Acts to be Passed and implemented. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs need Social Workers in the Communities to report cases

of sexual harassment or sexual offences but they are not there because there is no money to pay them. We are appealing to the Government to ensure that the Ministry which is the parent body ensures that this particular Act is been implemented through supporting them with finances. We are also calling on other Development Partners to really support the Ministry in the implementation of this Proposed Amendment Bill. Support us as the Female Caucus, support other organizations working with women and children to ensure that we minimize if not put a stop to Sexual Offences and other violent acts against women and children. This is not about politics; it is about life and future of our children. Let us stand up and put a stop to these crimes by passing this Bill into Law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I took up two things in the Amendment Act yesterday which I was really interested in. As my sister was talking about supporting the victims, the victims who are more vulnerable are children and specifically the disabled children who are been tampered with. In the Act, you will find out that it is only the mentally disabled people who are mentioned. Yesterday, the CSOs were able to recommend here that, the Act should not only look at the mental disability of children, persons or women but all disabled people being deaf, dumb, blind you name them. They recommended that, the physically challenged people should be included and the perpetrators should be severally dealt with devoid of the execution of the Life Imprisonment mentioned in proposed Amendment Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other concern is about the victims who are been impregnated during rape. Off course, you would sentence the man for fifteen years but what happens to the impregnated rape victim? Which support should be given to the said victim? So, we also have to look at the Act and include that particular concern of support that should be given to the impregnated victims of rape as the CSOs and other women that were present yesterday also recommended for that because there are a lot of those women in our Communities and nobody takes care of them. They are just loitering around with their children and nobody cares about them. So, we are looking forward to see how that one can be captured in the Amendment Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to see not only the imprisoning of people but the placing of their photos all over in public places for the public to recognise them as rapists. We have to name and shame them. Whilst they are in Prison, their photos should be out in public places. One disheartening thing which normally happens in our Communities is we compromise such cases. We tend to compromise them because of poverty. Yesterday, the Minister was sharing with me an incident which happened in Lungi. A man took an eight years old girl and raped her, after raping her, upon him realising that the girl was bleeding, he washed the blood and raped her again. He repeated the act over and over again. That is an act of a wizard. Some people are doing this not just because they want to be sexually satisfied but they have a motive for committing such act and this is not good. For us in this House of Parliament, be you observer, be you journalist, whosoever you are, we all have a responsibility to say no to these people in our Communities *[Applause]*. The Courts and the Police might be proactive in fighting sexual offences but if we in the Communities and neighbourhoods tend to conceal and compromise these cases we would become more than witches and wizards. By compromising these cases, the perpetrators will continue roaming the streets freely and continue committing these acts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on this note, I want us all to think of not just passing the Act into Law but for us to think of being parents whose children or sisters are potential victims of sexual violence. Let us think of that and support the process of ensuring that this particular Amendment Act is Passed into Law in this House in order to ensure that our next generation grow up without any fear. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Moiwo H. Gavao, you have the Floor and after you our traditional fathers, the Honourable Paramount Chiefs will make their own contributions to the Debate. After the Honourable Paramount Chiefs have made their contributions we then wind up the Debate.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, how I wish it is not unconventional, there would not be a better time for us to pray silently for the young girl who died as a result

of sexual penetration in this Country other than today, today been the day we are discussing the Sexual Amendment Act. This Nation is mourning a young baby who was sexually penetrated and as a result of that, that baby lost her life. We have lost five of our sisters in Sierra Leone who have been brutally killed because they were in pursuit of justice for the death of one of their friend who was raped to death at the Beach. Five of them died. We have lost five Sierra Leoneans who were brutally killed as a result of what emanated either from rape or sexual penetration therefore, we have to treat this issue very seriously. If there has never been any issue to which the entire House can agree, I think this Amendment Bill is one such issue. There is no Parliamentarian here who either directly or indirectly has not been affected by this Social malaise this Country is going through. No wonder, the President upon seeing the alarming rate of sexual penetration and rape decided to declare a State of Public Emergency on it. This Amendment Act today, colleague Members of Parliament, is born out of that Proclamation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we look at the long title of this Act, it is saying: ***Being an Act to amend the Sexual Offences Act of 2012, to make Provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from fifteen years to life imprisonment; to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault; to make provision for the prosecution of offences under the Act; to make provision for the making of rules, by the rules of Court Committee, to further regulate the practice and procedure under the Act and provide for other related matters.***

We have had the Sexual Offences Act of 2012, yes, there was an Act but it was within that period that we saw somebody been convicted for hours having committed sexual penetration. So, the Attorney General's Office, the drafters in their wisdom, all Sierra Leoneans and the Executive arm of Government thought it prudent that, if we are to actually fight this malaise, there is every reason for us to amend that Sexual Offences Act to increase the maximum penalty in the 2012 Act from fifteen years to that of Life

Imprisonment. This is one thing some of us who have been brain storming about this Bill have agreed to and particularly Honourable Nyuma who is one of my Leaders. He is of the view that we should not make the offence of rape lucrative whereby we start bringing emotions into it. If a child of thirteen years can sit, think and organise as to how he should go and rape a twenty three years old woman because he thinks he is heftier than that woman, why not also have a sufficient way of punishing that child irrespective of the fact that there are other Acts which say a child who falls within a particular age bracket cannot be punished? This Act, for me, so much time has been invested into it. In the long title of the Act, it also says: ***to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault.***

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: If we look at the 2012 Sexual Offences Act, there was no provision for aggravated sexual assault. Under this proposed Amendment Act, for the first time in this Country, we have the provision that covers issues or events of wherein a man may force himself on a woman and impregnate that woman or transmit sexually transmitted disease into that woman like HIV and the like.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all know, having been a specialist in Criminal defence, that the preliminary investigation process which the Sexual Offences have been going through, has been delaying the prosecution of sexual offences in Sierra Leone. By this Act, Section **42** is hereby amended that if the Attorney General thinks there is need for such a matter to be prosecuted, that matter can be prosecuted without it going through the preliminary investigation stage. By having that provision, we can have Sexual Offences prosecuted within one month. If a case does not have to go through a Preliminary stage, you just take it straight to the High Court and have it prosecuted, you can have a case commenced and completed within one month. I am very passionate about this Mr Speaker because two of my farm female workers have become victims of this. Three years ago, one of them came and said to me: ***'ooh my daughter has been penetrated'***. I had to stand in Court to fight that case. After six months the other one came and said to me: ***'my daughter has been penetrated'***

and the perpetrator has run away". So if you take a statistics of parents in Sierra Leone whose daughters are been violated, out of every 100 women, 70 of them are women whose children are unlawfully abused in this Country. So there is every reason for us to actually come together and expeditiously Pass this Bill into Law in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whilst we work towards the passing of this Bill, we would also want to crave the indulgence of the Government for it to ensure that we have the enabling mechanism to make the work of the Attorney General a little bit easy because as a practising Lawyer, one of the ways the Medical Doctors would always write their report is; they will say: ***'rupture of the Hymen'***. They will not tell you when the Hymen was ruptured but with the provision of a Forensic Machine, as a start, will be able to tell us when was it that an offence was committed, if the man deposited his semen into it, were the bruises on the victim, did they find the blood of that man deposited in the victim. So, we want to call on the Government, now that they have taken this fight extremely very serious, for them to inject so much money into it so that we can get the necessary equipment needed to be able to help the Office of the Attorney General for the speedy prosecution and investigation of these matters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area that I would want to call the attention of the Government to, whilst we work on this Bill, is to increase the number of Police Stations in the Country. My Consistency does not even have a Police Station; they have one Police Post in Kissi Kama.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Mebers, the number of Magistrates in Sierra Leone should also be added. The entire Kailahun District has only one Magistrate who sits in Kailahun town, come sit in Daru and sit in Shegbwema as well. Magistrate Seray Wurry has been active enough to start Sitting in the Kissidom. For the first time in twenty years, the people in the Kissidom saw a stipendiary Magistrate. So, this is the situation. If it happens for a poor woman who lives in Koindu, who does not earn **LE 500,000** a year and her daughter is penetrated, that poor woman has to travel from Koindu to Kailahun which would cost money to report the matter and pursue it. That poor woman would definitely not afford the resources needed to follow up the said case and the case would

not be prosecuted while the perpetrator would go scot free. So, if we are going to take this fight very serious, we should not only concentrate the fight in the urban areas, we have to take the sensitization and the actual fight against sexual penetration to the villages. I am an example Mr Speaker. I am sure your good self is also an example. We come from the most remote parts of this Country but today we are here due to education. If our future was destroyed by one event yesterday we would not have been here. So, if we juxtapose our situation with that of the girl child in my village, if we cannot fight for them because they are in villages, they cannot find themselves in the City. For us the Kissis, a Kissi child can never come to the City except for education. So, it is a serious problem which we have at hand and I want us to actually look at this fight which the Executive has championed, from the passing of the Proclamation, to having the Attorney General's Office sit down right round the clock to draft this Bill.

Mr Speaker, you being a Legal Practitioner, you know Drafting is one of the most difficult branches of the Law. This is all the reason why Sierra Leone can only boast of one specialised Drafter. To have a Bill of this nature within this period of time, from the date of Proclamation to this time, it takes so much work by the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cannot have all of the thoughts of Sierra Leoneans into this Amendment Bill. There might be need for several Amendments of other Laws relating to social issues in the near future but as far as the urgency of this Proposed Amendment Sexual Offences Act is concerned, there is every reason for us to expeditiously work on this Bill and have it Pass into Law because we should be mindful of the fact that the Proclamation has been revoked here in this House and now we have a vacuum, a vacuum where nobody can be prosecuted and sentenced to life for the act of rape, we still have the fifteen years maximum sentence. So, you can still have somebody being convicted today and sentenced to one year imprisonment because that is the Law. So, within this vacuum, if we cannot have a Law, then that dream of the President, that desire of all mothers in this House which is to have a robust legislation that will peg the punishment of Sexual Penetration to the maximum of Life

Imprisonment cannot be achieved Mr Speaker. That is why I am so very passionate, if the House decides to commit it to the Committee of the whole House, fine. If it is to go to the Legislative Committee, being the Chairman of that Committee, I will crave the indulgence of all Members of that Committee to start working on it the moment it is so committed because there is every need for it to be passed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must comment that several virtuous noble women have been working round the clock since they heard that this Bill has been brought to this House. This Bill is so sensitive. Since I started my Parliamentary career, I have never seen any Legislation sensitive as this Bill. There are times, I get calls from all over the world; Australia, America, Canada, people asking what is happening? I have had interviews with children who are so particular about where this Bill is. We are the representatives of the people. The Children are out there waiting today like we were waiting for the outcome of the National Elections Result. They are waiting today to hear about what is happening in this House: they might be asking questions of: what is it that our fathers, mothers, those we sent to go and represent us are doing about this very important Bill? How are they going to deliberate on this Bill today? They are demanding for Life Imprisonment. As we are sited here, there is still a maximum of fifteen years sentence for the act of rape. The children might still be asking: are they going to give us Life Imprisonment as a penalty for the act of rape within the shortest possible time or is it going to take the longest of time? Let us have them on our minds as we deliberate on this Bill and ensure that we give it to them as a gift of the Raining Season so that maximum imprisonment can serve as sufficient deterrent to the act of rape.

I want to thank you Mr Speaker for giving me audience and I want to thank all colleagues, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice and all those who come here to show interest in this Bill. Thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: At this stage, I wish to recognise the presence of Mr Thompson the Specialist Drafter of the Republic of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. Honourable Members, incidentally he happens to be my lecturer, the lecturer of Honourable Mr Gevao,

Napoleon Koroma, Honourable Daniel Koroma and Honourable Timbo. Mr Thompson, you are welcome. I also wish to recognise the presence of the Deputy Attorney General and Minister of Justice Mr Napoleon Koroma who is here and a colleague of ours, Simity Lavalie, who is also here; all in support of this Bill you are all welcome. Mr Dumbuya the Deputy Chairman Sierra Leone Minerals Agency [SLMA], you are welcome *[Applause]*. Honourable Paramount Chief, you have the Floor.

HON. P.C. MATILDA Y. LANSANA-MINAH: I am Paramount Chief Minah, from Pujehun District.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, I am sorry. Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, be ready to take the Floor after the Honourable Paramount Chief Member. You can proceed Honourable Paramount Chief Member.

HON. P.C. MATILDA Y. LANSANA-MINAH: It will be disappointing for a woman like me not to support this Act because as a Paramount Chief, there has been a lot of report on rape in my District as you usually hear of Pujehun District with the highest impregnated school going girls which I do not believe. This is just because we always report the incidences of rape whiles other Districts may not report but I think it is a general sickness all over the Country. School girls are always impregnated by people and the girls do not report to their parents, they do not report to anybody. You just see them with three or four months old pregnancies and when you report such incident to the Family Support Unit [FSU] or the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the parents would attempt to follow up the matter maybe in two or three occasions but because of poverty, the family members cannot afford their fares to always cover twelve or fifteen miles, they may decide to forget about the case and stop going to the Court whiles the perpetrators would go scot-free.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I heard a colleague Member saying that the budget allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs by the Government is a meagre one which I support. I am therefore, on behalf of colleague Members of Parliament pleading with the Central Government for sufficient support to

be given to that Ministry for them to be able to implement this Act we are about to Pass into Law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people always say we Paramount Chiefs do not report the incidences of rape but we do report. As I said earlier, due to poverty, the family members do not follow up the cases. As a result of that the perpetrators go scot-free. In such a situation, what are we to do as Paramount Chiefs? Are we to be going in search of the perpetrators when they go into hidden to other Districts or other countries like Guinea or Liberia for them not to face the punishment of a jail sentence?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am here today to state that the fifteen years maximum imprisonment for the act of rape is too small and that the perpetrators should be jailed for life because having penetrated a girl who has never experienced such is going to stay with that trauma for life. Why not send the perpetrator to jail for life as the girl is going to be punished for life? The parents nowadays do not have the opportunity to see what some of us went through as women eighty years ago, when our parents were glad to see us married; they do not experience it anymore in this Country. I am sure all of us understand what I am trying to say? In the earlier days before now, when you get married, your parents are expecting something like a calabash but nowadays how many of you have received that from your children on the occasions of their marriages? Is there anybody here? There is nobody. How are we going to bring such again to this Country? Are we able to do it? I will say no.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am here to say we are suffering as parents or mothers. We are suffering because what our parents experienced, what some of us experienced is now lacking in the Country. So, I think that the perpetrators of the act rape should be jailed for life. Please let us take that Act into a very good consideration and see that perpetrators are jailed for life. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara you have the Floor. After Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, the Leaders will wind up the Debate.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Having listened to the Debate across the Well today, one would say we have concentrated our minds and our focus on the victim. We have played the emotional game because most times the effect of rape and penetration is so devastating but Mr Speaker, as the Honourable Member from Kono, a female, said she is a potential rape so also we the men here present more so political leaders, are also potentials to be victims of these allegations. I sense a situation in which if this law is passed into Law the report of the incidences of rape would decrease because of the effect of the punishment if certain measures are not put in place. We are talking of a situation of Life Imprisonment in a Country where the first place to report in most Communities is to the Chiefs and Paramount Chiefs. I have worked in Communities where I have seen, when matters are been reported to Paramount Chiefs, the first thing they do, is to levy a fine of a goat, sheep, rice and so on. How do we get the hands of Paramount Chiefs and traditional rulers off the matters of rape or sexual penetration and get the victims report these matters to the main stream institutions considering the fact that we do not have good roads at all? I worked in Bo, Gondama to be specific, in 2004.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara. Honourable Paramount Chief I will give you two minutes to react.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Let me be on record to say I am not in any way attacking Paramount Chiefs but I am bringing out the situation as it was when I was in the interior in 2005. Mr Speaker, if we do not have the required machineries to prove these cases beyond all reasonable doubt, we would see situations in which men will be victims and go for Life Imprisonment for issues they actually do not commit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I foresee situations in which people would run into somebody's office and come out and allege of been raped or sexually violated. There is one thing about sexual violence be it rape or penetration, the moment your name is align to it, even the best of your friend will disassociate you [*Applause*]. As we sit here today as Law Makers, we applaud the good side of the law not knowing it is a trap upon which Honourable Members would be dishonoured. As we seat here today as

Honourable Members, this law if not critically looked into, will make us vulnerable. Imagine, every morning, most Honourable Members here sit at home and they have so many people within their Constituencies coming to their houses to ask for different things. I foresee a situation in which allegations will be floated up. I see no reason why we should not look at the critical nature of this Bill beyond just this Well *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, committing the case to High Court is one area of the Amendment. I will give kudos to the Attorney-General, Minister of Justice and the Drafters because that will bring speedy conclusion to matters of rape considering people who are leaving in far distances. For example, if I am to travel from Tonko Limba to Kambia for such a matter, though it is 27 miles, I have to spend a whole day and if that matter is to be committed on that very day, it means I have to pass the night in Kambia where I maybe have no relative to stay with.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again, what about the children who are born out of these illegal or painful circumstances? Would they be abandoned by their parents because the circumstances in which the children are born are painful which would always give an ugly reminder to the parents whenever they see the children? What is this Law putting in place for such children who are victims of circumstance?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the gaps are so much but I want to emphasis, I want to ask that though we are in speed to have the Law Pass, there are also related laws we have to look at critically with no emotions but realistically, holistically and nothing else.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have seen situations in Sierra Leone where most people who have been accused of rape are family related with the victims. Therefore, it would be painful if proper sensitization is not made to a sister who would report his own brother for the act of rape without knowing that, that brother would go for Life Imprisonment. It therefore, behoves us as Honourable Members, not just to Pass this Law but even before the Passing of this law, we have to go round to our people to educate them well and to do the needful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again, we have to put stringent measures in place for people in authority who try to influence these matters for them not to succeed because sometimes you have even Police Officers who are supposed to be prosecuting these matters tell you [S.O 2] "***pa dis mata ya if we sen am, da man dae go fo life imprisonment oo, una nid fo tink bout am***". What is the Law saying about such a situation? What about a situation where a person would say [S.O 2 Quoted] "***pa dis man na e campaign fo me oo, ah nor go tinap tae e go jail***". What is the Law saying about that person? So, we have to address not just the issue of emotions even though, the child is raped.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again, for children who are alleged to be raped at two, three, four and five years, most of them cannot tell the actual stories. In a situation where you have a problem with the neighbour who intends to blackmail you, where is the forensic instrument that will prove beyond all reasonable doubt that you are not actually the perpetrator of rape? My brother, Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao from Kailahun made a point that even at the point of giving result; the Medical Doctors will not give a specific time when the incident occurred. What about a situation wherein a person has suffered rape a week before and she is forced by the parent to call the name of the perpetrator? Hold be tied on you as an Honourable Member, your name is called the moment the journalists get that information you are guilty before you are actually sent to jail. The journalists would simply just say a particular Honourable raped; they will not even say the Honourable is allege of committing rape. What about the stigma on the perpetrators who are not guilty? We only look at the stigma on the part of the victim. What about the perpetrator who is not guilty? So, it should be a two way approach. We have to be careful; we have to be minded as Honourable Members when passing this Law. We need to know that it is also a trap for us; it is a trap for Politicians. I am emphasising, it is a trap for Politicians. So, we must tread consciously. For people occupying offices, the Executive arm of Government, this is a trap and it must be looked at carefully.

Mr Minister of Finance, we are asking, if there is going to be a supplementary budget?

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara. This Act cannot be a trap for me, it cannot be a trap for any Member of Parliament who does not put himself in that kind of situation and it cannot be a trap for us. So, please, when you Debate, please be careful as to the kind of issues you bring before this House.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I will not emphasise but God still remain God and the future beholds itself. Let me say to the Minister of Finance, if there is going to be a Supplementary Budget, I want to advocate for resources to be allocated for a Forensic Machine so that we can prove people beyond all reasonable doubts for them not to suffer themselves. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief Bai Kurr, you have the Floor. Honourable Paramount Chief Kajue, do you want to say something? The Honourable Paramount Chief Member is reacting already; do you still want to react? Okay then, you will have to pass the information to your Honourable brother.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR K. SANKA: No. When I am done, she can speak.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. You please have two minutes because the Leaders have to round up and Honourable Emerson Lamina will want to say something? Okay, you have two minutes please.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR K. SANKA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy that the Nation is reacting to issues of importance that will lead to the development of our children. As usual, I have been in this Parliament since 1996 and I am very disappointed when some of these young people come to Parliament, they have no respect for Chieftaincy. Believe me, if we are honest and sincere to this Nation, the Paramount Chiefs are the Peace Keepers of this Nation *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you see people do things; they do not study and understand. If you go to America the biggest Nation in terms of size and development, every dwelling place has a Mayor, a Council and a Police Station. Everywhere you go, whether it comprises of three, four, five and six hundred people has a Mayor and that Mayor is paid. Here, we do not have Mayors in our villages but we have Town Chiefs,

Town Headmen, Youth Leaders and Section Chiefs who carry out the daily activities of keeping laws and order in this Nation but they are not paid. For example, Masingbi has one Police Station of less than 15 Police Officers with a Population of over **76,000** and they do not even have a vehicle. I have to provide a motorbike for them. If the Chiefs are not there, we the Paramount Chiefs carrying the burden of bringing law and order to this Nation, there will be chaos. So, I hope when some of you stand up to talk, talk what is really needed. You talk of Paramount Chiefs levying a fine of goats, Mr Speaker, all of you here seating know very well the first place of call in any a town or village you go, is to the Chiefs. For some of them, even though, they are given per diem but they expect the Paramount Chief to lodge them and provide food for them that is the essence and it is a fact. I live in the main High Way between Kono and Makeni, Kono and Freetown. Let us do not talk about Parliament because when you begin to talk; think about what you were receiving before you became a Parliamentarian and what you are receiving now. We the Paramount Chiefs are only receiving Two Million Leones with all the responsibilities we carry. As I am saying, I came in late, I had to take two people to the hospital who came all the way from Masingbi because they were sick and they had no money, I had to pay for the one Three Million Leones. How many of you here are doing that? Some of you do not even go to your Constituencies any more *[Applause]*. some of you could not come to Parliament order than the Party putting you up. You dressed like a Chief, so behave like a Chief.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in my own little way of contributing to the Bill, the Attorney General and Minister of Justice, this is a very serious Bill. It is serious and it carries the Flagship of the nation. We have to educate the people of this Nation. Education is of essence to this Bill. We changed our Prisons to Correctional Centres and let me tell you something that I have discovered happening. You will find out most of the most of the act of rape happening now in the villages and towns are done by young boys and to young girls. Are you going to jail a seventeen or eighteen year old boy for life? Education is something we have to consider. Let us do not only talk about rape. Do we control the Social Media in this Country where the girls and the boys are watching

all kinds of things in the world? You would find six, twelve and thirteen years old boys looking at movies, terrible things in the Social Media and they learn these things. What about controlling the Social Media?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Pademba road Correctional Centre was built for **344** or **350** people. Today it has over **1,500** people. Are you going to add another **2,000** people in there again? Do we have the social logistical support to put in these people for life? You see, Parliament does not do wrong. So, we have to think; you have 146 Honourable Members including the Speaker which makes it 147. We have to think of what will be the consequences before passing this Bill. What will be the social effects of these? As I am speaking, I have over ten daughters of my own my real daughters. So, I am in support of trying to control these sexual activities but also we have to look as a Nation at when we begin to lock everybody and we begin to send them to jail for life, the world is watching. The International Community will come in and inspect our jails, if only you read, lately you see the condemnation we got about our Correctional Centres at Pademba road, Bo town, Makeni, Magburukar and so forth. The lack of what is expected to support the Correctional Centres is also a problem. So, let us find a way of controlling this crime.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to educate our people. As the President is saying, let us provide the education for our girls, let us provide the education for this Nation and let us see what we can do to stop some of these terrible things that are been shown on the Social Media. Education is of essence, we have to educate the people of this Country, we have to educate the children of this Country and we have to educate the entire Nation to know that this is a burden on the society. If we jail them all then we are going to spend more money on taxes. Therefore, I support the Bill but let us find a way of handling the issue of a fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen and twenty year old boy who rapes even though, they might not be doing the right thing. There are also allegations that will be made for others to be locked up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, also, as other Members have said, we need the Government to give total support but to support for the imprisonment of perpetrators

for life, we have to also think if we do have the Prisons, if we do have the logistics, if we do we have the people, if we do have the Courts as the Courts are already loaded. There are very young boys who are locked up at the Pademba road Correctional Centre for minor crimes. They have been there for two, three years. We have to consider that. As former Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs, I visited the Prisons and sometimes I have to go to Courts. I find children who have been in jail for four years for the crime of stealing mobile a phone. I have seen that. Where are the jails? Where are the Social Workers? Where are the Sociologists?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we the Chiefs are proud; we are sons and daughters of great people who made this Country what it is [*Applause*]. Some of you who are educated in this August body, your grandparents have to force your parents to send you to schools I know it, even when I became Paramount Chief in 1988, I had to lock up people to put their children in schools and today some of those children are Doctors. If you go to my house; I have over 37 children boys and girls who are going to Universities right in my house here in Freetown. I challenge everybody to go there at Aberdeen Road. So, we carry the burden of this Nation. When Elections come, you want the Chiefs to be on your side and when we are on the other side you blame us. Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Paramount Chief. Honourable Emerson Lamina, you said you wanted to say something.

HON. EMMERSON S. LAMINA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, speaking to the Bill, the Amended Sexual Offences Act will definitely ease the burden on the Imams at the 'Masjid' as well as the Pastors in the Churches who have been preaching morality for this Nation. I am conscious of the facts of the Agony women go through during rape. I am also conscious of the unreported Sexual Offences serving as a cartel for women not to reach their Affirmative Action. We will definitely give our blessings for the enactment of this Bill because I am still very impressed by the Statement made by Former President Koroma in Moyamba in 2010 on the International Women's day when he apologised to the women folks for the rape they went through during the almost

eleven years interregnum and I am still very thrilled and I align myself to the Proclamation of His Excellency Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio in protecting the girls and women.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also call Members in the Legislative Committee today to take note of few things. In as much as we continue to support this Amendment, we still call on Members of the Legislative Committee to look out for synergies, if impossible juxtapose few documents here. Firstly, The Child Right Act of 2007, the Children's and Young Persons Act cap 44, the Prevention of Cruelty to Children cap 30, Sexual Offences Act 2012 and above all the Constitution of Sierra Leone. We call upon them also to look out for devices to eliminate the culture of compromise. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members it cannot be gain-said that the culture of compromise has become so repetitive like a parrot scribe in the villages as well as in the Urban areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, secondly, to also look out for devices to create Witness Protection Programs and facilities because if the witnesses are not protected, they will be afraid to come out and speak up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, lastly, we look out for education and the popularisation of this particular Bill. It will go a long way to scare men to even enter into such action.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on colleagues in this Honourable House for the speedy Ratification of the Bill entitled: the Sexual Offences [Amendment] Act 2019. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Chernor Bah, you have the Floor.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH *[Leader of Opposition]*: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I am sure if you want this Debate to continue for the next three or four days it will continue. It shows the importance this House liaised to this Amendment but may I remind all of us that this is an Amendment. There is an Act in existence which was passed in 2012. This Amendment, listening to colleague Members

of Parliament and the wider public more so Women Groups, this Amendment is turning to a Parent Act. I am sure you will agree with me.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank His Excellency the President for listening to the call of this House. When the Proclamation was made, it was also said that an Amendment to the Act will be the most prudent thing to do and today we are at that stage *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I also want to encourage colleagues, when this Bill would have been sent to the Legislative Committee; we should not just leave it with the Legislative Committee. All those who have interest and believe that they have reasonable and realistic ideas should take those ideas to the Legislative Committee so that when the Report come back to this House that will not be the beginning it should be something that we will be looking towards the end because I know colleagues would wait for the Legislative Committee to do their work and when the Bill comes to this House, it will be looked at again with an eye as if it is for the first time it is coming before us. Mr Speaker, the reason why I encourage colleagues to pay keen attention when the document will be before the Legislative Committee is because I heard the Chairman, unfortunately he is not here now, of the Committee which I am not aware of, talking about penetrations that would lead to the transmission for instance, Sexually Transmitted Diseases like Human Immune Virus [HIV] and others. For HIV, I am sure we have the HIV Act, he might not have averted his mind to that; there are penalties in the HIV Act. So, this Amendment should not be looked at in isolation. There are legislations that should guide and aid the very work that they will be doing in the Legislative Committee so that we would not duplicate existing laws in this very Amendment we are talking about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank the Attorney General, Minister of Justice and her team for making sure they bring this document. There is no way you will have a perfect legislation, no way. That is why we are here today to amend the Sexual Offences Act of 2012. I am sure even after this, there might be gaps in the not

too distant future. They should not be blamed for those gaps because the gaps will always be there because laws are dynamic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all I want to say is to encourage those that will be looking at this document after today, to do it as Honourable Emerson Lamina said, to do it expeditiously but also with caution so that whatever we do will yield dividend. It was the Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao who was talking about pumping in resources in support of these laws. This is because when the laws would have been passed, those equipment, the technology that will be needed, be it forensic or otherwise should be provided to ensure that whatever decisions the Judiciary will be coming out with are basically based on tangible facts and those facts must be guided because when you send somebody to Life Imprisonment you know what it means. We should make sure that when we send people to Life Imprisonment which is tantamount to the death penalty, we must be sure that those individuals deserve Life Imprisonment. We are under obligation to support the women, the girls and the girl children in order to ensure that they do not suffer for nothing. We have sisters, we have mothers, we have aunts and we have daughters. It is our duty to protect that particular group of our society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I want to thank you very much and encourage the Committee to do a professional and speedy job so that soonest this Amendment will go through this House. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Mathew Nyuma, you have the Floor.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA *[Acting Leader of Government Business]*: Thank you very much Mr Speaker and thank you very much Honourable Members for your contributions. We are so proud of Honourable Members for their contributions to this Bill. As Honourable Chernor Maju Bah said, people are intending to replace the Parent Act which is the Sexual Offences Act of 2012. The fact is we are not trying to replace the Parent Act which is the existing Act. If you look at the long title, it is specifically talking about rape and the increase of the jail term from the maximum 15 years to Life Imprisonment. It also looks at the issue of aggravations and if you have read the Bill you would realise that aggravation was well handled in the Bill. If I am to borrow the

words of Honourable Chernor Maju Bah, he said: ***'we want to amend this Act in conformity with other existing laws'***. That is basically what we are doing and we are clear about that. So, for us to bring other issues that will change the face of this Bill is not done and we have to be very careful. The veracity why we have this Bill today is because of the menace we have in society. We want to change the narrative in our society and if we are serious, we can address this particular issue of rape in a serious manner.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some Honourable Members talked about Minors and the issue of Consent. Consent is different. When you are below the age and you involve in sexual intercourse that is not consent. As long as you are a Minor you should not involve in it, it is a crime. So, we have to be mindful of some of the things we do. The reason why we should look at this Law in conformity with other laws is especially to treat this rape issue very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Emerson Lamina said we have to look at Section **24 [1]** of the Children and Young Person's Act Cap **44**, Section **70** of the Child Rights Act very seriously but we had a lot of consultations on these. We have agreed that because we want to change the narrative and that we want to be very serious in combating this menace, we are going to make provisions with the leave of the Drafters in collaboration with Members of Parliament to ensure that we get provisions that will address the issue of rape. The whole issue of rape is intended, planned and executed by individuals and it is highly stigmatised. Most times, the crime of rape against children of three or five years old is perpetrated by boys who are 15 years old and they are all minors but there are existing laws telling you not to sentence them. So, we are not going to repeal the laws but we are going to make sure that we treat the business of addressing the issue of rape very seriously and that is what we referred to in the long title of the Bill. We want people to look at the narrative that, it is not business as usual. Our business now is to ensure that, what we said in trying to combat Rape is now a reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said it is only people with filthy minds who commit the act of rape but real men do not rape. So, my Honourable Member on the other side who talked about the Act being a trap for Honourable Members, I thank you Mr Speaker for interjecting and correcting that particular statement. I am a real man, I cannot rape. If you rape, you are not a man. It is just because you have filthy thought; you are not a decent person in life if I can borrow the words of Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao who said: '***we do not want to make crime lucrative***', we want to make crime very punishable if only we are going to be serious with this Bill. So, it is not a business of mediocrity but a business of us as Law Makers, to ensure that we do not compromise when we are making laws. We have to follow the spirit of the law and today the spirit of the law is to combat crime on rape. So, if you come here as an advocate for children, the issue of Human Rights on the crime of rape is over for us. We are going to address it adequately, we are going to make sure you are punished for what you have committed because for the victims, some of them have died but we are not talking about that, some of the victims were really manhandled before they passed away. So, are we going to stand to say we are not considering the issue of Human Rights in the fight of rape? No. We are looking at Human Rights from another perspective. So, that is the reason why we are treating this particular Bill in conformity with other existing laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there has been concerns on this issue of poverty. Honourable Members have praised sang poverty. Let us be mindful of the fact that there is no perfect law. As we go along we have to be making amendments. I hear People say because people are poor, they do not have money, if a wealthy man is involve in the act of rape, he would bribe the poor parents and the parents would tend to compromise the matter but let me be worry to tell you that in this Bill, as I said, we want to change the narrative, we are going to criminalise the act of compromise. The act of compromising the crime of rape is going to be a crime and it is going to be punishable. So, you do not say because I am the parent of that particular victim therefore, I am going to compromise the matter. You do not have to compromise, you

do not do it. As I always say, the difference between us and Chimpanzees in the Jungle is the Rule of Law. So, nobody is above the law. That is the reason we are serious in Passing this law, that is the reason we are exhausting all the channels, that is the reason we are looking at other existing laws and that is the reason we are here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to look at the issue of Publication as it is very serious. We do not want conflict in this business of combating rape which is a menace in our society. We want to see collaboration between and among the Judiciary, the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs. We want to see these institutions synergizing because when it comes to the area of Publication, they all have key roles to play. As I said earlier, we want the crime of rape to be adequately punishable as the victims of rape are equally going to suffer and be stigmatised for life. We want the Judiciary, the Police and the Ministry of Social Welfare Gender and Children's Affairs to collaborate in the process of creating a data base and publishing the names and faces of all culprits engage in the act of committing rape. Let us say for every quarter in the local Communities, they will have to be publishing the names and faces of rapists in the local Newspapers and announcing their names on the Local Radio Stations to indicate that a particular individual was involved in the act rape. This is because our society is seen to have a very short memory and because of that someone can serve a jail term for rape and return to reside in the same Community without been noticed but if for every quarter, they will have to be publishing the names of perpetrators in the Local Newspaper and announcing their names over the Local Radio Stations, people will not to forget in a worry. We are going to stigmatize the perpetrators equally as the victims. So, this is not any lucrative business, it is a serious business. So, for us, that is the reason why I really do not want to talk much about the mitigating effect because I do not really want us to water down this business of Rape. The reason why we want to Pass this Amendment Bill is to really address the issue of rape. Therefore, let us all be objective and reasonable in order for us to pass this Bill into law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also want our colleagues to understand that witness protection, Madam Minister, is very important to us. If you listened to Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao, the witnesses for the Aberdeen case were all executed. They went after them and killed them. In fact, if you follow the case carefully, there has been no tangible evidence coming from the actual people who were very close. All what they are having now is from people who were just around and not the actual witnesses but they are trying to see what they can get tangible from the people who stay around. You really cannot follow up much on that. So, we are trying to have witness protection. I know we will address it very seriously in a collaborative manner when we go to the Committee Stage. We want to ensure that we protect witnesses so that this business of Rape can be treated with all amount of seriousness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said, the issue of aggravation is treated very seriously in the Bill. I have heard Honourable Hassan A. Sesay mentioning about consent. He said: "***what about if a man having an intercourse and along the line decided to change his mind?***" You will start intercourse with consent and half way, the individual has the right to withdraw the consent. That is what makes us men. You can be at your peak and the lady would say I am tired. In that circumstance, you have to be much disciplined. You have to be a disciplined man because that is a very serious issue *[Laughter]*. So, let us be mindful because the issue of aggravation would come in.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Order!

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: So if you look at the Bill, the area of aggravation in Section **19** is very clear. So, if the consent is withdrawn, for me, if you are a disciplined and practical man, just stop right there to avoid problem *[Laughter]*. So, I think the Attorney General [AG], you have done a very good job, you have addressed most of the issues in the Bill proposed to us. We said, we want to change the narrative of the day. We Honourable Members, our contributions are very meaningful and I believe we want to treat this issue with the utmost seriousness. I want to caution all of us, when we Pass this Bill into law, we have to be very careful and be disciplined. Laws are meant for

men, so, you have to be a disciplined person. It is not only talking about the Sexual Offences Act but other laws. There are criminal laws around you so you have to discipline yourself. I mean, if you go to bed with somebody, it has to be a mutual consent but if that one [consent] is withdrawn, accept it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for us to succeed, it has to be in two folds. It has to be implementation cum enforcement. Enforcement has to do with other agencies like the Police; we have to work with them, that is the reason why I am talking about collaboration. We have to encourage those who are in charge of making rules to be effective. It is very clear in the Bill, in the long title Bill that, the Rules of Court Committee shall be making the rules. Madam Minister, in our consultations we have heard people saying that the Rules of Court Committee is not really working. So, you really have to do more especially for this one. We have to treat this one very seriously. You have to talk to them to come up with the rules. For me, I will advise you to bring it in the form of an Instrument to Parliament so that we can table it for it to be part of what we are doing. It is just for you to make a statutory Instrument. You can do that one and thank God you have the Draft man here. Tell them that because we want to see things going in line with our aspirations. So, today Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that we commit this Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, hold on, hold on Honourable Member. Let us hear from the Minister first, we would come to that. Yes, hold on till we get to the Committee stage.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Alright. Let me just now say these final words. Mr Speaker, thank you very much for arbitrating us today. Madam Minister, thank you very much. I really appreciate our colleagues from the other side of the aisle for their wonderful contributions in realising that we need to Pass this Bill into law. They have not given any dissenting views, they have even strengthened us to pass this Bill and they have even commended the Minister that she has done a very good job but there are gaps. They have involved in a lot of consultations, I want to thank our female colleagues who have contributed immensely to this Bill. Our traditional rulers, those who play the Chemistry of our people, those who are with us, I thank you very much.

Honourable Paramount Chief Bai Kurr, your contribution was wonderful; do not be carried away by small boys, live above them as a Paramount Chief, if you see Honourable Members charging you that is fun. Do not be carried away by that. We are happy you contributed to the Bill; I was really looking forward to seeing you contribute. It would have been very surprising to me if you had not contributed because I can remember in 2012; you were very instrumental in us passing that Bill. He was very instrumental because we had difficulties with the Paramount Chiefs. So, it is an interesting Bill if only we discipline ourselves and we make Sierra Leone a better place for all of us. It is not only going to be for the women but for the men also. So, thank you very much Mr Speaker. Thanks to all of you for your wonderful contributions. May the lord bless us all.

THE SPEAKER: Madam Minister, you can make your response.

PRICILLA SCHWARTZ: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of this House, let me first express my thanks and appreciation for this Debate. I have listened keenly; I am truly heartened by what I have heard that everyone in here or at least specifically those that have made contributions have given deep thought to the Bill that is before this House. Your interventions are very important. What this Amendment speaks to as I have noted in the presentation is to deter and discourage or rather curb the prevalence of Sexual Violence specifically with a focus on children and also other practices that the Bill speaks to. It is clear on the face of the title, what is before you deriving specifically from a Proclamation that was before this House, specifically from a document that was consulted with the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Bar Association, the Office of the Chief Justice and other Court officials, taken to Cabinet and with the focus on what it sort to achieve, we tried very hard.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of what has been covered here today as I say is important. Maybe, in here it is easy to Pass laws or to make laws but the space of creating that law is not an easy one because we have to be mindful that they are laws of the land. Every law of this Country as you would know, you the law makers, is important in its own realm and in its own right. We cannot subordinate any other rights

that have been created in other laws unless we deliberately want to do that and speak to that and I would advise to do that and bring them before you. Most of the issues raised here are relating to issues that are important. Some of them are institutional, some of them are social, some of them are educational, some of them are in terms of what equipment we may need for support, some of them are in terms of social assistance and some of them are in terms of psychological. So, again the scope has been widen which is not in line with what the purpose of the tittle is, that is not to say that they are not important. What is important about them is that we are thinking now deeply into the issues that are before the Country as a whole. You as law makers are speaking to issues that are prevalent in our customs, in our communities, in the Country which we have been talking about but for His Excellency the President taking that bold steps to actually pronounce it and speak to it, we are all now embolden to want to deal with it, we are going to be talking about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I like the Debate because it is not the end, it is a beginning. We cannot curb everything you have talked about in this little Instrument. Even if we were to legislate a Bill as big as this House, we will not address the problem in one year, in one day or in the next probably ten years because it involve as you have all introduced; issues about education, issues about logistics, issues about support but the very important things that are immediately connected with the Bill, I will do my best to inform my Cabinet through the Office of the Ministry of Finance to address them especially the issue of Witness Protection which is very important. I would also do my best to move and the President has already taken steps in that direction by his own personal commitment towards providing the Forensic Lab which will deal with some of these issues *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the background of this Bill before you, we have been looking at the prosecutorial issues that will arise; we have been looking at the Legal connections that are there. I understand the sentiments, I am a woman, I am a mother and I have daughters, I also have brothers. So, I understand the complexes. You can imagine the public voice; I hear people telling me **'send children to jail'**

others telling me ***'do not send children to jail'***. At some point, somebody has to make the decision and that decision should not go outside the purpose of the tittle. We are all law abiding citizens and when we make the law we must make sure that we respect the premise of the law. So, in speaking to some of these things, I do not want to bother you but I will only speak to the once that I can immediately speak to, to allay your fears. What I tend to understand is the assumption or not, forgive me, that when this Bill is passed, everybody will be just taking on a one word and sent to jail. No! The due process of the law must take its course. It means that there must be proof. There is a heavy burden on my Office through the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions or where I so direct any other person to prosecute in the name of the state and to make sure that we prove.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Remember, I am the Minister also of Justice. It means whiles my Office is prosecuting, I also direct the Legal Aid Board. They are the defenders, sort of like the Public Defenders. We have a whole host of Paralegals who are working to support this. What we want to maintain and I will assure this House is that we would be just; we would be fair because we are looking to work towards a just society. I assure you that sentiments, emotions will not over ride our judgments. We will strict to the law. We want to protect girls by the purpose of this Bill but there are rights elsewhere in other Acts which protect other persons that have rights as citizens of this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to also assure this House that we will ensure that we keep our International obligations whiles we seek to deal with our domestic issues. I want to applaud those who spoke to Education, those who spoke to Technology, those who spoke to Culture and those who spoke to what the role of the Paramount Chiefs are because there is a collective responsibility on all of us. It is not to fight to try to enlarge the Act as if we can fit everything. I will tell you as the Attorney General that, what I have come to realise is that we do not have shortages of laws. We were seeking to address a specific pandemic. We have started a Debate and we will continue this Debate and we will provide the rules and instruments that are necessary

for the implementation moving forward because as you would know, every legislation will require operational and implementation issues and on implementation, you can face certain issues that you never thought would have happened when you started it. We cannot be able to craft everything here or put everything here. As Honourable Chernor mentioned, there is a Parent Legislation; there are Parent Legislations covering most of what has been identified here today and those Parent Legislations have their own rights and authorities. Therefore, if we sought to open up things that go into that remit, we would be ultra vires. So, I appeal to the House to show restraint in examining the Bill, to focus on what is before you but also to catalogue what we need to do moving forward in the implementation of this Bill. Making recommendations in terms of where budgetary issues will be necessary for its implementation is important because I do think that implementation and enforcement are the most difficult things we have in this Country. What happens to the psychological effect on children when they are so abused? Yes, we can send people to jail, we can make sure we catch all the criminals but even if we do that, we will still not be able to be called a Developed Country. So, we must look at the underlying causes why our boys, men and brothers are perpetrating this rape. So, it has to be collective responsibility to deal with it. This Bill is not Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP], All People's Congress [APC] or other Political Party Member Bill. It is an action by the people of Sierra Leone to say no to violence on women, to protect their children, to protect their daughters and their boys. Every citizen in this country has a right and in seeking to protect, we also want to ensure that we do justice so that we can have a peaceful, just and cohesive society. I thank you very much Honourable Members of this House. [Applause] On that note, reasoning Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled "***The Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019, being an Act to amend the Sexual Offences Act 2012, to make provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for rape and sexual penetration of a child from 15 years to life imprisonment, to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault, to make provision for an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault, to make provision for the prosecution of offences under the Act, to***

make provision for the making of rules by the Rules of Court Committee, to further regulate the practice and procedure under the Act and to provide for other related matters”, be read the second time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled the Sexual Offences Amendment Act 2019, being an Act to amend the Sexual Offences Act 2012 to make provision for the increase of the maximum penalty for Rape and Sexual Penetration of a child from 15 years to life imprisonment, to make provision for the introduction of the offence of aggravated sexual assault, to make provision for an alternative conviction of aggravated sexual assault, to make provision for the prosecution of offences under the Act, to make provision for the making of rules by the Rules of Court Committee to further regulate the practice and procedure under the Act and to provide for other related matters has been read the second time]

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I stand on ***S. O 51[1]***. I want us to commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee and because of the interest groups we have.

THE SPEAKER: Are you moving a Motion?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Please do so.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I Move that, we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee with other Committees that are also in line with this particular Bill, using ***S. O 51[1]*** of the Standing Orders. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ISHMAIL S. SANDY: I so second Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter Motion?

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion moved by the Acting Leader of Government Business to commit the Bill to the Legislative Committee has been carried]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as a House, we have committed this Bill to the Legislative Committee and other related Committees. We expect that you meet almost immediately and look at this Bill critically because it is very important but even as we go as a Committee or Committees to look at this Bill, I want us all to remember that certain facts have been drawn to our attention. Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao has informed this House and of course, I do verily believe that a child died as a result of rape. Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao said that, in fact, he is aware of other children; up to five of them have died as a result of this particular conduct for which we are here to make this Law. of course, this is about those that have been published. We have hundreds, maybe thousands of children that have died as a result of this particular conduct we are about to curb. It is a sorry state; it is a situation that is very serious. As a Nation, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves. So, please even as we retire to the Committee level, Honourable Members, I ask you all to rise briskly in your chairs to observe a moment of silence for these children that have perished. *[A moment of silence observed]*

Honourable Committee Members, please even as you go, even as you try to look at the Clauses, remember these children. It is very important. Yes Honourable Member, you have the Floor.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: I just want to make a plea to the Chairman of the Legislative Committee to co-opt Committee on Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs, the Human Rights Committee and the Female Caucus. They are very important Committees which we want the Legislative Chairman to cooperate with.

THE SPEAKER: And the Health Committee. The Health Committee, the Committee on Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs and the Committee on Finance?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, if they want, they can attend but these three Committees are the selected ones and we have reason for doing so. For other Committees, if you want you can attend but the selected three are; the Female Caucus, Human Rights and the Social Welfare Committees. They should join the Legislative Committee. Other interested Committees who think they can join, can do so.

THE SPEAKER: Of course the Minister of Finance is here, you can go all out to ensure that the necessary funding is provided for this particular Committee Sitting, for it to be very effective. Committee Members, I give you up to Monday to produce the Report because it is very serious. I am Adjourning this Sitting to Tuesday. Against Monday, we want the Report in all of the Pigeon Holes of Honourable Members. I want this Bill completed not later than Tuesday. I am Adjourning this matter to Tuesday. Let us ensure that the needful is done against Tuesday, please.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. Members of the Committees that have been mentioned, we would want you to know, the Desk Clerk will be announcing that there will be a meeting tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. we really mean 11:00 a.m. we want to start on time so by the time it is 3:00, 4:00 5:00 p.m. we would have completed and certainly with the Minister being here and him also knowing the importance of the Bill, I have no doubt that he will take the necessary steps. Let us take it very serious and be there on time.

THE SPEAKER: On this note, I also order that the Inspector General of Police, the Director of Crime Management and the Director of the Correctional Centres appear before the Committee on Internal Affairs at least so that we know as a House, as to whether they have been doing their best to be able to capture the reason behind this kind of malaise in the country. So, please, the Chairman of the Internal Affairs Committee, do we have the Deputy Chairman here? Please, ensure that you summoned the Inspector General of Police, the Director of Crime Management and the Director of the Correctional Centres to appear before you and we want a Report not later than Tuesday, please, Committee on Internal Affairs.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister of Finance, please take the hot seat.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, before we proceed, I want to draw your attention to an issue we have in the Well and as far as I am concern, it is still inconclusive. Mr Speaker, this is about those people we still have in our midst who are not supposed to be here and let me state why I am saying this Mr Speaker. We know that the matter which brought those Members of Parliament; the so called Members of

Parliament, I will say that, it is not unparliamentary, it is not unparliamentary, this is bordering on legality and it is bordering on the law [*Undertone*]. Let us do not set dangerous precedent Mr Speaker [*Applause*]. Why am I saying these? I do not mind if they have to come to Parliament but let us do the right thing, let us do the needful in order to ensure that the procedures are followed before they come to join us otherwise, we would continue to consider them as strangers because they have not gone through the due process.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Hassan Sesay, I think it is noted. Let us proceed.

V. GOVERNMENT`S MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

JACOB JUSU SAFFA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Financial Agreements which were laid on the table of this Honourable House today, Thursday 11th July 2019.

[i] Framework Agreement Instalment Sale Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank.

[ii] Agency Agreement Instalment Sale Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program between the Republic of Sierra Leone and Islamic Development Bank

[iii] Technical Assistance Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank [ISDB] concerning Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program.

[iv] Loan Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and Islamic Development Bank [in its capacity as the Administrator of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development] regarding Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have the honour to inform you that the above Loans and Grant Agreements were signed by me on the 4th April 2019 on behalf of the Government of Sierra Leone and the President of the Islamic Development Bank during the Annual meetings of the Islamic Development Bank in Marrakech in Morocco to finance the Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program. The overall purpose of this project is to contribute towards the reduction of the higher importation rate of rice and enhance economic growth through improved production and productivity in a sustainable manner. The project comprises the following components:

Component A - Raising Rice Production and Productivity: This component will cover the cost of critical production factors that directly affect the increase in rice production and productivity which will include [i] construction supply and installation of small scale irrigation systems [Intake structure, pump sets, HDPE Pipes, Farms irrigation Channels, etc.]; [ii] Land Preparation [clearance and levelling] and; [iii] supply of certified quality Agricultural inputs including improved seeds varieties, quality fertilizers and agro-chemicals; [iv] provide access to microfinance finance for farmers to enable them purchase inputs; [v] support to extension services including farmers including training, field demonstration and plant health. Efforts to increase productivity will take into consideration social and environmental safe guards. The component will focus on land development of the Value Chain including Small Scale Irrigation systems and land preparation clearance. It will bring on board technologies that will raise the current low Rice yields under smallholder production systems. Improved irrigation systems will aim at having at least two rice crops a year, with a third crop of vegetables or legumes in between them. Additionally, this component will cover yield enhancing technologies [improved seeds, Fertilizers and agro-chemicals] and Extension Services. Also, soil fertility mapping will be conducted at the onset of the project to guide fertilizers application.

Component B - Strengthening the Links to Markets: This component will cover the cost associated with [i] construction/rehabilitation of **3** market facilities and supply of **2** river crossing Boats; [ii] construction/rehabilitation of storage and processing facilities

development including **3** storage buildings and its drying floors, rehabilitation of one of the existing milling facilities, supply of **1** parboiling machine and **9** milling equipment; [iii] construction/rehabilitation of 35 km of rural roads; [iv] access to finance for 70 Small Medium Enterprises [SMEs] for [women & youths]. The component is focusing on strengthening the farmers and off takers links to markets through providing access to post-harvest value chain facilities including storage, processing and rural markets facilities.

Component C - Fostering Enabling Policy and Institutional Environment: The component will provide support to [1] seeds research, multiplication and certification entities including Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute [SLARI], Seed Multiplication Project [SMP] and Sierra Leone Seeds Certification Agency [SLeSCA] under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry; [ii] capacity development including formation and strengthening of Farmers Groups, training of women and youth and conducting agriculture study tours; [iii] introduction of advanced digital solutions [hard and software] to provide real time information for Farmers on weather, agriculture extension and market; [iv] IT based Monitoring and Evaluation [M&E] systems including geo-referenced database system. This subcomponent will also provide support to the Agricultural census to help in creating accurate and sound agricultural database to facilitate proper planning studies and informed decisions making.

Component D - Project Implementation and Coordination Support: The project will provide resources for management and coordination at both national and regional levels. The support will cover the cost of the [1] Project Implementation Unit [PIU] salaries, vehicles, offices, furniture, equipment and operation [ii] consultancy services for the design and supervision of civil works, audit, market studies, soil fertility study and consultancy for ICT based M&E system; [iii] workshops and regional activities including a start-up workshop, annual M&E workshops, technical backstopping and the operations of the National and Regional Steering Committee [NSC].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Rice is a main staple food in Sierra Leone and it is produced across the Country mainly by Small Holder Farmers. However, local

production is insufficient to meet demands and of course the Country has heavily been dependent on import. According to Planning Revelation and Monitoring and Statistical Division of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, total Rice demand was **700,000** tons in 2017. In contrast, local production was only **300,000** with the **400,000** imported from International Market in 2017. The Annual cost of the import stands at **\$200Mln.** The Sierra Leone Rice Value Chain Production Project will support the implementation of the National Rice Development Strategy which aims to close the demand supply gap and contribute to food security as well as poverty reduction which is aligned to the New Direction Manifesto which prioritized Agriculture and Forestry, Fisheries and Marine Resources, Tourism Sector; as they are considered vehicle for promoting economic growth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the expected benefit of this programme is to contribute to the country's ambition of becoming self-sufficient in rice production giving the fact that government is currently importing almost all the rice that is consumed in the country at high cost. The Project will improve the production and commercialization of the Small Holder Rice Sector in the Country. It will also ensure that 45% of its total beneficiaries are women and youths Small Holder Farmers who will have access to new technologies, modernized irrigation systems and improved seeds to increase productivity, financial and technical resources as well as extension advisory services provided by the project and equitable decent employment opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry will be the executing Agency of this project. The Project will be implemented by the Project Management Unit [PMU] hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and located in the capital, Freetown. The PMU will be directly responsible for the Project Management including planning, financial management, procurement and quality of the deliverables. Two projects implementation units will be at the Tormabom Chiefdom and the Kambia District to follow up on the day to day activities on the ground and report back to the PMU. The PMU and PIU will be staffed with Project Coordinator, Agricultural Extension Officer, Irrigation Engineers, Procurement Specialist, Finance Officer, Gender

and Youth Specialist, M&E Specialist, Communication and Advocacy Specialist and Business Development Officer.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the total cost of this Project is **\$34.12Mln** of which Islamic Development Bank contribution is **\$22.3Mln** analyse as follows: Loan of **\$2mln** under the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, instalment sale of **\$20Mln** comprising Framework Agreement and an Agency Agreement of **35%** grant element and technical assistance of **\$300TH**. What is before you now Mr Speaker and Honourable Members is that of the Islamic Development Bank. Additionally, the Arab Bank for Economic Development will contribute the remaining **\$10Mln** and the Government of Sierra Leone will contribute **\$1.82Mln**. The Loan shall be repaid in thirty years including the ten years grace period commencing from the date of this Agreement in United States [US] Dollars and in forty consecutive semi-annual instalments with an interest rate of less than **2%**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, given the importance of the above project, I Move that this Honourable House ratify the following Financial Agreements:

Framework Agreement Instalment Sale Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development Programme between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank

Agency Agreement Instalment Sales Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development Programme between the Republic of Sierra Leone and Islamic Development Bank

Technical Assistance Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank concerning Regional Rice Value Chain Development [ISDB] concerning Regional Rice Value Chain Development Programme

Loan Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and Islamic Development Bank [in its capacity as Administrator of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development] regarding Regional Rice Value Chain Development. I thank you for your attention.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the day is far gone, I am going to take one speaker from each side of the aisle and then we hear from to the Leaders. Honourable Kaisamba, you have the Floor.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think you will agree with the Honourable Minister that the four agreements signed for and on behalf of the people of this Country is very relevant and important for the ordinary man. As you rightly mentioned, rice is our staple food in this country but for quite a very long time we rely on what we call subsistence farming of which we cannot be even able to feed ourselves before the year goes round. So, essentially what is this saying? That with these Agreements signed, the Regional Rice Value Chain Development Programs will improve productivity of rice and particularly so rice farming. He has gone further to analyse the amount of money Government spends on importation of rice almost every year which is very huge. So basically, if this Honourable House ratifies these Agreements this afternoon, the benefits are immense to the ordinary man. It will improve irrigation system, it will strengthen the links to the markets, there will be road construction in the various rural areas all over the Country particularly Tormabom, it will reduce poverty, it will promote economic growth and of course self-food sufficiency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister has also gone ahead to analyse the conditions for the repayment of the Loans. Some of the Agreements are Loans but the terms of the Loan payment will not disturb the Country in any way. There are Grants which of course we know definitely that Grants are given for and on behalf of the people of this Country and Loans, these are monies we pay over time but they are very reasonable. I am sure; we will agree that these are non-controversial Agreements but to improve on our agricultural activities particularly so that we want to diversify the Economy. We have over relied on the Mining Sector whiles we ignore Agriculture, Tourism and other Sectors. So, Agreements like these will definitely help Government and the ordinary people particularly the youth and women. We are talking about employment; we are talking about enhancement of women. So, these Agreements

definitely are geared towards improving all of those areas. I would have loved to see the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry who will be implementing all of these Agreements; it's very important. Over the years, we have passed a lot of Agreements in this Parliament but what as a Parliament or as Committees we fall short of is to follow the implementations. We have not been following that at all and it is very important. These are very huge sums of money, we want to ensure that they reach the required beneficiaries and we want to see the dividend that it will give to the people in those areas and eventually the Government and the Country. I have in fact, gone ahead to instruct the Clerk of my Committee particularly, to look at all the Agreements we have ratified, be it Agriculture, once it is being signed by the Ministry of Finance so that we follow on their implementation to ensure that they are within the terms as prescribed in those various Agreements that will benefit the ordinary man. So, I am not sure this is a controversial issue at all. It is fine and it is very important. We are talking about rice production in Sierra Leone. So, the interest rate is very minimal, these are interests that we can pay. I thank you very much. I do not want to waste time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Aaron Koroma, you have the Floor.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I am sure the Agreements we are about to Ratify have to do with the Ministry of Agriculture and I want to ask whether the Ministry of Agriculture is actually represented here today because they should be here. For all I am seeing is only the Minister of Finance and maybe some members from the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry that is going to implement these Financing Agreements is not even represented here and I am sure that is a very serious concern which the Speaker must send a very stern warning for future Agreements that will be coming to this Parliament for Ratification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by virtue of my orientation, I have been a Member of the Agriculture Committee since I came to this Parliament and as a result I have enormous passion to seeing that Government really invest enormous resources to boosting Agricultural productivity because I believe it is only when we boost the Agricultural productivity we can be able to address other Sectors because we can

attract foreign reserve which the Government or the Country will in turn use to revive other Sectors in the Economy and that goes to say I am not going against the purport, the objective or the merit of the Agreements before us here because all of us need food and we all know the importance of food to our various households and our constituent's households but Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are Members of Parliament and this is Parliament; the House that makes the Laws and we all know that as Members of Parliament we are supposed or we are expected to respect or protect the laws that we Pass in this Well. That is one of our sacred responsibilities we must always uphold.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have read through the Agreements, the Framework Agreement Instalment Sale Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank. I can understand when the Chairman of the Finance Committee was making his submission, he is a linguist. When you look at the Financing Models of the Islamic Development Bank, they have various forms of financing models and the Minister can agree with me that for Islamic Development Bank, one of the most favourite means of granting resources to countries is through Loans because they do not charge interest. What they charge is service charge.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Aaron Koroma!

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: They used this form which is a new form which they called the Instalment Sale Financing of giving resources to countries, but the consequences of that particular form of financing is very serious because what the Bank will do and the Bank sees that as the main source of generating its revenue and we all know what it means when you look at the content of it, it is saying that the Bank is going to give or the Country is going to procure equipment from the Bank at a very high rate. It is not in the Act but when you go to the web of the IDB, I read exactly what the Instalment Sales Financing means; it will tell you that it is the main source of financing for the Bank and we are not strong for that Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, there are few issues that I also want to preface.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have also looked into the Agreement. When you look at Page 2[b] of the Framework Agreement it says: ***"The Bank has on 16/12/2018G approved and greed on the basis, inter alia, of the foregoing to finance the Assets through Instalment Sale Financing for an amount not exceeding \$20Mln as blended financing comprising 65% ordinary financing [equivalent to \$13Mln] and 35% grant [equivalent to \$7Mln] upon the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth"***. Mr Speaker, let me refer this House to Page 16 of the same agreement which shows the disbursement of funds, you will a see clear disparity or disconnect between the first page to the schedule being provided on this page. It shows that, when you look at t grant column, if you work **35%** of the **\$20Mln** it means it should be **\$17Mln** and the remaining should be **\$13Mln** but when you come to the schedule it does not reflect. What is showing here as a grant is **\$300TH** which is even less than **1.5%** grant. So, I am saying that this financing model is a very poor Agreement and it will add very serious burden on the already burdened Economy that we are already experiencing *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to legality. Let me refer this House to the Public Financial Management Regulation [PFMR] Section 135[2d] of the PFMR which were laws passed by my good friend whom I so much admire the Honourable Minister of Finance. When you make reference to that law which I want to refer the House to, Section 135[2d] it says: ***"After an agreement on an external loan or grant is signed under sub-regulation. The Minister shall submit the following documents in Parliament in order to seek ratification: [a] A copy of the signed agreement; [b] an explanation of the terms and conditions on the external loan or grant; [c] In case of financing of a project an abstract from the latest Public Investment Program"***. It should not be oral presentation, like he did when he submitted these Agreements before us. The question is has the Minister submitted the documents outlined which I want to read for the understanding of Members present here? Do we have that as a copy here Honourable Members?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the understanding of the public and Members of Parliament, the last time I checked the Public Investment Program of Government which the Minister here did presented to us, Mr Speaker, I want to refer the House to annex 4 of the Budget which outlined the Public Investment Program of Government. Mr Speaker, what that regulation is saying is, for any Agreement that has to do with a project financing being brought here in this Well that the Minister must give an abstract of that particular investment from the Public Investment Program so that Members can make reminiscence or correlation of the Budget we have approved. The most unfortunate thing Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, is these Loan Agreements which we are about to Ratify which are before us cannot be found in the Public Investment Program of Government. How can we approve loans that are not been budgeted for? *[Applause]* We are a constructive Opposition; we have supported Government in the ratification of many Financing Agreements.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: You cannot obstruct me Mr Leader. This is my domain, allow me to lecture please. Listen and learn Mr Leader. Please Sir. You are my boss, this is my domain, I am a trained and qualified Accountant. So, I know what I am saying. I am speaking from an authoritative point of view, allow me to land. *[Undertone]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of these have not been adhered to. I have just said that Section 135[2C] of the Public Financial Management Regulation is very much important to any Financing Agreement that has to do with a project financing being brought here, has to be in the Public Investment Program. These Agreements before us cannot be found in the schedule of the Public Investment of Government. How can we ratifying loans that have not been budgeted? We cannot Mr Speaker. More importantly, let us come to Section 135[2d] of the said regulation. This is an investment, much as we applaud Government to go into this investment, Section 135[2d] says: ***"in case of financing of a project, a summary of the financial appraisal mentioned in paragraph d of sub-regulation 2"***. That is what the regulation is saying. Because Government want to go into an investment, whereby it will buy equipment from the

Bank and after getting the equipment it will pay in an instalment bases and the equipment will eventually become theirs, it is the same as using this model which is the Instalment Sale Model, you have to give the appraisal. This appraisal is supposed to tell the Nation of the Economic viability of the project. This analysis is not before us. How can we Ratify a project of which we are not sure if it is going to be profitable or not? This project is going to add more burdens on the already burdened Economy.
[Applause]

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also refer the House to the legal framework of the Agreement, on the same page. When you look at Page 26, Mr Speaker, I want you to really follow because it is very important. You are a man of high repute and we respect you. We should be respecting the laws we make, it is very important. You are a young man, it is for posterity. Mr Speaker, let me refer you to the second to last Clause, after the sentence which says: **"for the purpose of this Legal opinion.** The Bank is saying: **Accordingly, I am of the opinion that the said Agreements signed for and on behalf of the Republic of Sierra Leone by name and Title/Position of the signatory [b] Does not violate any provision of the Constitution, any law, rule, regulation, order or decree of the Republic of Sierra Leone.** What are we saying Mr Speaker? I have outlined many violations, are we saying that these Agreements before us have not violated any Provisions? I will state here categorically that it has not only violated the Public Financial Management Regulation but also the Public Financial Act of 2016 [Applause].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have therefore submitted enough evidence to prove that if the Government continues with these Agreements in the time being, we will be in default and when we are in default it will have negative consequences on us as a Nation and as a constructive Opposition I will not let these Agreements to be kicked out, no because I want food to be on my table but I am proposing here for the sake of posterity that we suspend, we do not have to Put a Question but allow the Minister to do needful so that we do not go in contravention of the Provision which we have here Otherwise, whatever we do here will be going against the very laws we have

Passed in this Parliament. Many indictments have been made against the last Government that we have passed bad laws. I am happy that the law I have made reference to is the very law our erudite Minister here presented here before us which we passed.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, Honourable Aaron, I am sure the Minister is taking note of all the points you are raising.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Especially your note Sir because you are the arbiter of proceedings here.

THE SPEAKER: I know.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: You must be guided with the laws.

THE SPEAKER: You are correct, Honourable Aaron A. Koroma. I am taking notes and be rest assured the best thing is going to be done for the Republic of Sierra Leone. Please, try to conclude.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, in conclusion, like I said, I have enormous respect for the Minister and I am sure he is always in a hurry to ensure that financing is provided for this Country. Even though, he has not found the formula for the bread and butter which I always asked him for but yet still he is doing his best. Mr Speaker, I am saying that there are better options which the Ministry would have sought. When you look at the IDB, they have many funds. Like I said, they have the loan which is an interest free, it is a better option. They have the Instalment Sales which they have resulted to. The Bank is seeing that as its main source of generating revenue. They have what we call the Equity Participation. They also have what we call the Profit Sharing. Those are all favourable conditions which the Government can go into so that we can create a win-win situation into whatever Agreements we are going into. Mr Speaker to serve my conscience and to also help the Ministry in relation to of this very last clause in the framework which is the Legal Opinion which the bank is expecting our Country to make. It is saying that whatever we do, these Agreements must not contravene or violate any provision of our National laws, rules or regulations and so therefore, Mr

Speaker, I am recommending that these particular Agreements, I am not moving a Motion. It has to do with bread and butter so I will not go against it. I am a constructive Opposition Member of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Aaron A. Koroma.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: I am a Member of the APC but for us not to have the difficult consequences as a result of the breaches which we have already seen, let us allow or give a day or two so that the Minister can do the needful for us to continue with the ratification of these Agreements. I thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Finance, you have heard what the Honourable Aaron A. Koroma has just said. Let us here you.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, do you have anything to say?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: No, hold on. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, have you got anything to say? Hold on, Honourable Tawa.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the people who are professionals in that area have already spoken out loudly about the deficiencies, about what is wrong or the things that need to be corrected in these documents. What we will like is to make sure we improve Agricultural productivity in our Country. At the same time, what we expect is to see that we reduce the volume of money that we spend in the importation of rice and other Agricultural commodities as we know that is one of the reasons why we keep losing value on our currency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that what we need to do or what we have to do is to reduce the volume of money we spend in the importation of rice etc. and if a project is there that will improve the cultivation of rice in our Country I think we will embrace that but at the same time, we must try to be looking at more home home-grown solutions to address these issues rather than depend on bad loans that will not

improve our Economy. So, on that note, Mr Speaker, I think at this point in time, we should revisits the document if that will be in the best interest of our Country and our people.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Mathew Nyuma, you have the Floor.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Tawa Conteh, when Leaders are rounding up, you do not say anything again.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I have a Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: This is simple procedure. When Leaders are rounding up, you do not say anything again.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Honourable Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, take your seat.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker that does not defeat my Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: No. Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh, please sit down.

THE SPEAKER: I said, Sit down. I insist.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: I insist, I have a Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Take me out.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader, proceed.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I have a Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader, proceed.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for every Agreement...

THE SPEAKER: If you are not talking, I will put the question.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, for any Agreement you must

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader, Proceed.

THE SPEAKER: Sergeant-at-Arms calm the situation down.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, can we have just five minutes recess please?

HON. ALPHA A. BAH: Mr Speaker, we are craving your indulgence to please allow Honourable Tawa to say what he wants to say.

THE SPEAKER: I am not going to allow him. Sergeant-at-Arms, I have ordered you, if he continues remove him. Sergeant-at-Arms?

HON. ALPHA A. BAH: I think Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh should be heard Mr Speaker, please.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh was voted to come and talk in Parliament. Nobody should deprive him of that right.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, sit down.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Honourable Members, let go outside we are going to vote against this Bill.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: If you send Honourable T. Conteh out we are going to vote against the Agreements Mr Speaker. He must be allowed to speak, he is a Member Parliament.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh was not brought to Parliament by anybody; he was brought here by his people. He must not be deprived of saying his view.

HON. ALPHA A. BAH: Mr Speaker, allow the Point of Order of the Honourable Member.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members sit down, Honourable Leader, proceed.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, allow the Point of Order of the Honourable Member.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, let us proceed.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, I have a Point of Order before the Leader speaks.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Our Standing Orders does not make any provision for Security Service. All of those men are strangers, they should not be here. We have only one Sergeant-at-Arms.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable sit down.

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, before the Leader speaks, I have a Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader, do you want to say anything now or you want to allow Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh to say something? Say something. I hope it is not in relation to this Bill? Then proceed.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker our colleague on the other side have raised issues concerning the Agreement, evaluation of some of our instruments we have but we believe in making and Agreement it has to involve two entities. We have what we call the Government plan. Those are policies which are bound to respect but as we carry on, with time, we make amendments. In all Agreements there are provision for suspension, cancelation and termination. That is for all Agreements you go through. These Agreements are not in variation with any other Agreement. It is just to complement Government efforts in areas where there is lack in budget support, in areas where Government cannot generate more money. They are now trying to diversify the Business of Government in terms of projects. It has to do with rice production.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you can recall, months back, the Government lunched what we called the 'Rice Production or Rice Sufficiency Program'. So, that is why we have these Agreements. They are in line with what Government lunched at the Miatta Conference Hall about four months ago. So, these Subsidiary Agreements are meant to support Government policies and they are not going against Government

policies. It is always in the domain of what Government wants to do and that is what exactly we are doing and that is why the Minister is here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, concerning certain clauses in the Agreements, they are not hard-and-fast rules. An Agreement cannot be amended by Honourable Members but they can be ratified. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at this juncture, I will like the Minister to respond to some of the queries.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, proceed on giving response to all of the issues.

JACOB J. SAFFA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are the bread and butter projects, the bread and butter you have been asking for. We are talking about rice, nothing else but rice. In the rice producing areas in the Bonthe District and Kambia District, rejecting or opposing these Agreements for whatever reasons, is refusing the rights of Sierra Leoneans to bread and butter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in relation to the violation of the laws, no law has been violated. Maybe, there is a misunderstanding but no law absolutely has been violated. We are very much part of the IDB, We have acceded to all the Agreements of the IDB. These Agreements you see of different nature and different forms are standard principles which cannot be altered because we have signed as Government and as a Minister of Finance I meet the Governor of IDB on behalf of Sierra Leone. So, there are no violations in there and it has gone through all the processes. Unfortunately, the Minister of Agriculture is not here because they are on a retreat I think in Kambia District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the statements I like about the comments is: ***"want to be part of the project"***. Honourable Francis Kaisamba the Chairman of the Finance Committee requested to be part of the implementation of all those projects. I will make available the status of all on-going projects before ratified by this House, I will make them available. I will be very much happy for you to be part of the monitoring of this project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, normally, we have two types of loans; we have the concessional and the non-concessional. The concessional loans are from the World Bank. AT any time you see the World Bank Agreement here, it is concessional, it is really concessional with interest rate of less than **1%** over thirty years period. The Africa Development Bank [ADB] is concessional, IDB the third highest project financing of this Country is also concessional. You have other agencies like OPEC Fund, Kuwaiti Fund, Saudi Fund and BADEA Fund are all concessional. So, first of all, as a Government we are very much committed to the extended credit facility of the International Monetary Fund [IMF]. The IMF will not allow a non-concessional loan. If we do that we will be kicked out of the IMF programme. One may tend to ask why. The IMF has to withdraw from Sierra Leone in 2017 because the past Government ratified concessional Agreements for Mamamah Airport project and other things. We cannot do that. We are very responsible and we understand the clauses. So, just be assured of that *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the point of confusion, there is no confusion rather there is limited understanding about some of the issues probably but let me clarify. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the framework Agreement, on Page 21, the general terms and conditions are all spelt out here. If you move on to the Loan Agreement here on the fourth documents you will see the payment schedule of the principal amount together with the services charged. It is all spelt out here in this document. Maybe, we just need to read it further again. Everything is spelt out here.

Secondly, as to the alleged contradiction, no, it is not a contradiction rather it is a misunderstanding about the figures. Figures are not as straight forward. It is not like $1+1=2$ normally. It cannot be so straight forward sometimes. If we look at the financing plan on Page 16, you have the IDB, you have the BADEA. I did say here that BADEA is committed to this project for **\$10Min** but this not what we are here for. Although, the BADEA component is yet to come, this is the IDB component and here you see the grant. There is a third Technical Assistance Grant Agency for **\$300TH** focusing normally on zonal support of **\$300TH**. That does not in any way exclude the

fact that the Instalment Sales here of **\$20Mln** has not got the grant component rather it is has the grant component of **35%**. So, Honourable Member of Parliament, just take a look at, it is very clear. The **\$20Mln** here has got the grant component of **\$7Mln** and **\$13Mln** to be loan. You also have two other windows. Remember, through the IDB, you have several windows of funding. As I speak to you, I am currently negotiating another facility with them. The team is in Country. So, the figures are very clear. I do not think there is any ambiguity in there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in terms of conformity with the procedures of the Public Financial Management, again, these Agreements are all signed, you could see my signature there. That is the way of the IDB, they do a framework Agreement of this type and they do the Agency Agreement. All of them have been signed. The terms and conditions are embedded in it. Terms and conditions do not need to be separate a document; they are all part of it. You can never have an Agreement that has not got terms and conditions spelt out. If that happens then it is not an Agreement. It is super flux to have an Agreement without terms and conditions. They are very clear here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to the concern of the inclusion of the Agreements in the Public Investment Program, Government commitment is **\$1.82Mln** and this project, the Government commitment will only come for the next Government Public Investment Programme. The current Government Public Investment Program, we came to Parliament in November and it was approved in December for project following. We never know this project would move as fast as it is moved. So, it is not part of the last Public Investment Program. The only reason for the inclusion, please let us understand, the reason for the inclusion of project in Public Investment Programme is for you not to have cause to spend on project for which you have not provided finance for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having said that, I will like to submit that, Government commitment to this project will only be effected in 2020 and come 2020 budgets in this House in November you will see that amount thereof **\$1.28Mln**. So, Government is not committed to spend any cent under this project in the 2019 budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, finally, I of firm belief that this is highly a concessional loan. As a seasoned development Economist, I just cannot go for non-concessional loan and bring it to you here that will be suicidal, that will be going against the spirit of the credit extended facility and that will be undermining. The number is less than **2%**, less than **1%** over 10 years grace period. Nothing can be favourable than this loan. This is the bread and butter. Commercial interest rates are normally **4%**, **5%**, and **6%**. In exceptional circumstances we go for non-concessional loans. So, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the bread and butter project. The other ability of this project is, it is one of the few projects that is going to have the project implementation lead right in the field Tomabo and the Kambia. What else can be better than that? Thank you Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I Have just been informed and I do verily believe that what we have been waiting for is almost accomplished but in any case I would allow the Minister to Move. Yes Mr Minister, you can move?

HON. PAUL S. SAM: Mr Speaker, just a minute Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member, you can proceed.

HON. PAUL S. SAM: Mr Speaker, of course the Honourable Minister is here, I think late last year, this House passed a Motion on certain issues. He talked about a car grant which was amounted to **\$13,000**. We are requesting the Minster to respond to it before we ratify these other Agreements.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on. Honourable Paul Sam, we are coming to that please.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Point of Order, we have the Order Paper. This is our Order Paper; we do not have that item on our Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: It is alright. Leave that to me. Yes, Mr Minister, you can Put the Question

JACOB J. SAFFA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of this House on Thursday 11th July, 2019:

[i] Framework Agreement Instalment Sales Financing for Regional Rice Value Chain Development program between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank.

[ii] Agency Agreement Instalment Sale Financing for Regional Rice Value chain Development Program between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank

[iii] Technical Assistance Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank [ISDB] concerning Regional Rice Value Chain Development Programme

[iii] Loan Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank [in its capacity as the Administrator of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development regarding Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program

THE SPEAKER: You did not even allow me to complete and you were jubilating. Honourable Members, if you could recall when I presided at the Bank Complex, I gave my word at that particular time and in less than two days you saw what happened. Is that not so? I do not tell you things I am not aware about. Let me assure you that we are almost there and of course as a matter of fact the Leader of Government Business has put in place a Committee of which Honourable Aaron A. Koroma, Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh and other Members are Members. You know the problem we have? The only problem we have in Parliament is the documentation. We have to ensure that the documentation reach the Ministry. I think that has been the delay.

Honourable Members, let me assure you that in the next couple of days this issue is going to be settled, I can assure you. So, all I am saying at this stage, let go all out to ensure that the Honourable Minister of Finance goes home very happy today and you will see the magic. He is going to create a difference; I think you guys are going to be

extremely happy. Now, in the circumstances, of course, I know my brothers on this side are happy. Any way in the circumstances, Honourable Members on my right, do not worry you will be okay, Honourable Members, on my left you will be okay and the Leaders, this is for the Leaders, please ensure that you give your Members adequate information about progress because as it seem they are not even aware about progress so far. I can assure you even before we go on vacation all of you are going to be happy.

Honourable Members, please take your seats. Honourable Members, it is settled. I can understand your frustrations; I can understand our frustrations but please let us ensure that the Minister of Finance goes home happy so that we will address the other issues.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Government`s Motion by the Minister of Finance has been ratified]

THE SPEAKER: I can assure you that things are in the process and we are all going to be happy.

HON SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to announce names of Members of a very important Committee to work on facilitation, fuel and also vehicles. This Committee is going to be charged with the responsibility to work directly with the Minister of Finance and report back to this House on our next Adjourned date. The names of Members of the said Committee are as follows: Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba, Honourable Aaron A. Koroma, Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh, Honourable Rebecca Y. Kamara and Honourable Titus Kamara. So, the five of you have the responsibility to make this Honourable House happy. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Any Comments on *S.O 23*. Okay, you can proceed

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: On behalf of my Constituents Makeni to be specific and on behalf of the APC Members and the general public, I want to use this opportunity to

thank his Excellency the President Dr Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for the purchase of 50 School Buses for our School going children. *[Applause]* I believe that is a move towards the right direction and we are looking forward for a continuation of this positive move in order to promote and develop the human capital of this Nation. However, it is important to note that this House ratified the Procurement Act and it is also important for the people of this Country to know the cost of these buses.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Sallieu O. Sesay, please, hold on. As a matter of fact, whenever you raise any issue that is subject to Debate that does not fall under *S. O 23*. So, please be guided.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: Accepted and I fully aware of that Mr Speaker. I am guided and I fully aware that *S.O 23* should be noncontroversial and the point I am making is not really controversial. We will follow the necessary *S.O 19* in tandem with *S.O 25* in following the procedure in calling on the Minister. The point I want to make is the House and the people of this Country need to know how we came about to identify the manufacturers of the buses.

THE SPEAKER: Do you want to do that in the form of moving a Motion?

HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW: Mr Speaker, those statements are not made with the permission of *S.O 23* and the Honourable Member is a second term or third term Member who is supposed to know what *S.O 23* is about.

HON. AMADU A. BAH: Honourable Mohamed B. Shaw, please do not condescend so low to say he is second term Member. What does that mean? The Honourable Member is making his point, please be mindful of what you are saying.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Amadu Bah, please, it is not done this way in Parliament. If you want to address the House allow yourself to be seen. Do you have a Point of Order?

HON. MOHAMED B. SHAW: The Honourable Member is addressing the House and the general public which was not permitted by *S.O 23* but he stood on *S.O 23* and he is bringing issues that are controversial. That particular issue is subject to a Debate

therefore, he should be guided on what *S.O 23* is about. He should observe what *S.O 23* is all about. That is my Point of Order.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that the normal procedure is you have to start by standing on *S.O 23* and you raise your issue from that point you now quote the relevant Standing Orders.

THE SPEAKER: No. If you rise on S.O 23, your comments strictly have to do with personal explanation.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: That was why I started by thanking and congratulating Mr President.

THE SPEAKER: No, that was controversial. Do not forget that we have Members of the ruling Party here. The moment you raise issues, they would want to Debate. so, limit that to personal explanation.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: The point I am making is, I will follow the necessary Standing Orders which are 25 and 30. On that note, I am giving a Notice of a Motion that we invite the Minister of Finance.

THE SPEAKER: No, when you give Notice, you have to file to the Clerk's Office then your Notice will be placed on the Order Paper of the next Adjourned date.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: Mr Speaker, if you can allow me I know exactly the procedures involve. I know it has to appear on the Order Paper and from there the Minister will be invited and then we have time to discuss.

THE SPEAKER: So limit yourself to that.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: With that Mr Speaker, I am moving a Notice of a Motion that we have the Procurement procedures that were followed by the Minister of Finance and the Head of Transport to explain to this House as to how came about in purchasing the 50 buses. I thank you.

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: It is noted. Just speaker form this side and we are done.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to say thanks to His Excellency Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio and the entire Government of Sierra Leone for paying **LE 33Bln** out of the Consolidated Fund.

THE SPEAKER: No, that is not permitted by *S.O23*. Honourable Moiwo H. Gevao, please limit yourself to *S.O 23*.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, in the circumstances, I want to the Government for pay **LE33Bln** from which my Constituents benefited of receiving his gratuity and end of service benefits.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 2:45 p.m. and adjourned to Tuesday, 16th July, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.]