



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 15TH AUGUST, 2023

SESSION – 2023/2024



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PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 15th July, 2023.

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Tuesday, 15th August, 2023.

IV. PRAYERS

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. CORRECTIONS OF RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON MONDAY 14 AUGUST 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the record of votes and proceedings for Monday 14th August, 2023. Pages 1? Page2? Page3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Can Honourable Member, move for the adoption of votes and proceedings for parliamentary sitting held on Monday 14th August, 2023?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABDUL K. BANGURA: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for Monday, 14th August, 2023 have been adopted]

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I have just been informed and I do verily believed that one of our brothers, Honourable Paramount Chief, Victor Brima Kebbie, is seriously ill and could not make it to this Parliament today. So, in this circumstance I ask that we all rise briefly to observe a moment of silence for minutes of silence prayer. May he have speedy recovery.

Honourable Members, I just wanted us to fulfil the requirement of today because as a matter of fact we are actually supposed to debate the President's address for five days. If we cannot proceed today then we will not have fulfil the requirements of the 5 days. So, I wanted us to take one from either side of the aisle before I adjourn, because we cannot proceed due to the illness of our friend, and our brother. Today, I just want one from either side before we adjourn but unfortunately the proposal and the seconder are not here. So, in the circumstance we are continuing the debate but can we have one

from either side just as a fulfilment of the requirement. But before we start I will get the Clerk to announce and we proceed.

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT, DR JULIUS MAADA BIO

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]

THE SPEAKER: Can we have one from either side, please try to be as brief as possible, 5 minutes to each speaker. Please proceed.

HON. KENAWAH F. TENGBEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Engineer Fallah Tengbeh from Kailahun District, precisely from the Kissi Kingdom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a tradition in our Parliament that whenever there is a Presidential address we have to say thanks to His Excellency, the President and there is no exception to this debate. On that note, I want to say a very big thank you to His Excellency, the President especially for the introduction of the big five changer in Sierra Leone with brilliance and alacrity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my submission to the President's proclamation on the 3rd of August, 2023, by virtue of Section [84] Subsection [1, 2 and 3] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. [6] His Excellency, the President acted in accordance with His Constitutional mandates. It is remarkable to note that the question of saying the introduction of the big five changers in Sierra Leone is geared towards giving Sierra Leone a face lift, this is one that cannot be challenged by the Opposition by saying that the introduction of these five changers is for self and self will end up for thyself, why can't we fight for pressure paid calculus. However, you will all agree with me that there is need for us to side step that view, precisely we have to look sharply on the contrary that the introduction of these agendas of the big five changers is geared towards catapulting and propelling Sierra Leone to the greater height.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the content of the people's manifesto is superb, it has got all that it takes to give Sierra Leone the correct position that we are all yearning to see in the shortest future.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me by highlight some of the key points in President's speech which I will be using as the bases for my submission. The President in His proclamation speech said; "the value of the people in democracy, He also said we should all move forward for what he called optimism." What is optimism? This is hope that we should have as citizens of this Country with the view of seen brighter future. Now, I will speak to the points that I want to share with this Honourable House and these points I will enumerate them into three pillars. The first points is the need for rural electricity under the infrastructural scheme and the second one will be the improved version of mechanised farming which is Agriculture, and the third is the value of the people in democracy: He defined democracy as Government of the people by the people and for the people. I will start with the first one which is infrastructure, if I am to grade the President on infrastructure I will give him 80%, the 20 % is the challenges we are facing as a Nation. I will draw the attention of the Government to the road leading to Koidu, the farer town of Sierra Leone where the road network is poor, people have to cross different borders with the view to sell their products and there is urgency in that part of the Country for the attention of the President for that road to be fixed. But I am very impressed and thank God for the President in His wisdom has captured this cleverly under the big five changers and today I will say this with ease and alacrity that our President has provided funding for the road leading from Kailahun to Koidu. Phase A of the project has commenced and the second phase is yet to start and because the second phase is yet to start, my submission is that as a Government we should look into this issue critically with the view to ensuring that the road leading from Kailahun town to Koidu is paved within the shortest possible time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are lots of successes that I have enjoyed, I will enumerate few under road infrastructure particularly for Kailahun Distrist because if I should go through all what have been done nationwide time will not be enough for me, we have benefitted from the 27 km road leading from Pendembu to Kailahun, 54 km road from Kailahun town to Koindu. First phase of the road has commenced and the second phase is what I am pleading for it to start within the shortest possible time and

we have also seen in Kailahun a modern bus station, these are all coin under infrastructure achievement but because of time I will not outline all that we have enjoyed as people of Kailahun. Again Koindu, I want to say has been a historical town and cradle of trade in this Country but it is no longer the cradle of trade in Sierra Leone. But if that road is fixed within the shortest possible time we will see Agriculture viability, economic viability in that part of the Country. It is my submission to this Honourable House that this Government, our Government do all the best to ensur that the roads are fixed in that part of the Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will now talk on electricity which is the backbone of any Nation, I am a trained, qualified and professional Engineer with 14 years standing in electrical and renewable energy systems. I want to share this with the Nation that I will not bother myself much with the availability of electricity now in Sierra Leone. Of course, we have transformed the availability of electricity under President Bio's Government from 16% to somehow 80% for the capital city with ease and alacrity I will say from where it was around 5% for rural renewable systems to where it is currently around 35% we are not comfortable but we want to say President Bio has done immensely well in terms of electricity provision in this Country and the issue I want to share with this Honourable House, is the vision that President Bio has as far as electricity is concern. He has given us what is going to last for long, I called it smart investment where today instead of using real logic that we used in the past we are now talking about smart system, we includes supervisory control and data acquisition systems to run our systems. President Bio today will sit in the State House and monitors the pump that runs in the House of Parliament with ease that is the level of technology we are exposed to, kudos to you Mr President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is need to protect our geographical borders that will take make my second submission for today. This would be a quick digression with your leave Mr Speaker, when I attending going way back in my secondary school days I was told the size of Sierra Leone was 72,300km/sq, today if I am to ask that same question I will not accept this time I am afraid to say Sierra Leone that has not

got that kind of area any longer because of the occupying tendency of the Guineans at the Yenga boarder. Today our people there are suffering; President Bio captured it very well in his speech by saying people are value in democracy and that is inclusive of Yenga. The occupying of the Guinean military at the Yenga boarder is a serious threat to my people living in that part of the Country; it is therefore my submission to this House that the President and this Nation look into that issue to ensure that the impasse is resolved as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will now go to my third point which is improve version of mechanised farming in Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Fallah, you have one minute.

HON. KENAWAH F. TENGBEH: Thank you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, supporting the President's speech especially in the area of food security, youth empowerment, human capital developments etc., I will say we have tried as a Nation although our attempt is not enough. I therefore want to celebrate President Bio for capturing mechanise farming as part of his big five agenda. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a typical African woman with a hoe in her hand was depicted to be the symbol for Agriculture. According to studies, researchers like Calestous Juma he also purported the fact that the challenges that African women face is clear related to that symbol, today because of the visionary leadership of our President, he is relieving women of such pain. So, it is my submission today that the President's agenda is a good one if we support what he has put on paper, we have to translate that into reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of the exigency of time and because I am pretty sure that my Honourable Colleagues also want to share their views with regards the President's speech, I would want to affirm to this House that all the measures that have outlined in the President's speech if followed with sanctity, it would catapult this Nation. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Fallah. Honourable Alice Sandy, you have the Floor.

HON. ALICE K. SANDY. Mr Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to participate in this all important debate. I am Honourable Alice Kornya Sandy representing the good people of Kenema District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I representing a District where the primary livelihood of my people is mostly Agriculture and I believe this is same for most of the Honourable Members, here today. Agriculture as we all know is the backbone to the Sierra Leone economy, as it estimates for 60.3% GDP according to the World Bank report and the Sector also accounts for 50.8% of the National labour force.

Mr Speakers, Honourable Members, our Nation is blessed with fertile soil and with abundant natural resources. However, this Sector remains high top on His Excellency, the President's speech in paragraph 25 of page 4. The President made his flagship programme to feed Sierra Leoneans this invigorates Government's commitments to ensure food security and self-sufficiency for our Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by prioritizing Agriculture for our Nation we are not only ensuring food security for our Nation we are also empowering our rural communities and reducing poverty and diversifying our economy. In paragraph 27 the Government outlined it commitments in boosting the Agricultural Sector. There are however some recommendations I will like to give to this House in ensuring the feed Salone project becomes successful.

Mr Speaker, we must invest in modernised Agricultural practices by this I mean providing our farmers with the access to advance agricultural practices providing them with modern equipment, better seeds to help boost the Agriculture. Moreover, we cannot talk about feed Salone if we forget the issue of land tenure and property rights for our farmers. Land is the foundation for Agriculture and a secured land right will improve and empower farmers to confidently invest in their lands for sustainable Agricultural productivity.

Mr Speaker, we should also address the aspect of value addition and Agro processing for our Agricultural products. Let us not also forget the importance of sustainable and resilient climate environment with the changing weather patterns in our Country today, it is imperative that we address issues that are threats not just Agriculture but our environment for us to ensure the Sector is well boomed. You all will agree with me that most of what we eat as a Country are all imported from another Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will like to entreat us all as Sierra Leoneans to please support with all our hearts and resources for the feed Sierra Leone project of His Excellency, the President, since this is not just a Sector but a life line of our people.

Mr Speaker, I will like to address the issue of the Youth Empowerment Scheme in the World where the aspiration of young people are the driving force for a Nation's progress, our President's vision for empowering young people is not only timely but essential. The youth are the heartbeat of our Nation and when harnessed and nurtured we can succeed in a unprecedented growth and development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has promised to create 500,000 jobs for our youth across Sierra Leone which serves as a beacon of hope, a pathway for brighter future and the testament to commitments for the development and empowerment of the youth of this Nation. This is a commitment that which transcend beyond political lines, political affiliations, it is a commitment to invest in a future, a commitment to nurture talent and a commitments to empower our youth by pledging to create 500,000 jobs for our youth. The President is sending a powerful message to the youth of this Country that their voices matter. Let us not however forget that to achieve this monumental undertakings by His Excellency, the President needs concerted efforts from various Sectors, starting from the Government, the Private Sector, Civil Societies and that of donor partners.

Mr Speakers, Honourable Members, I will also like to speak on the area of Technology and Infrastructure. We all know Sierra Leone is ranked as one of the least undeveloped Nations in the World today, our Government and His Excellency, the President is focused in revamping the public service through leverage in technology enablers. This is

why the President established a dedicated Ministry of Technology and Communications and appointed a youth to lead this Ministry. I will also like to remind us all about the value of leveraging technology for not just our daily lives but also for the Public Service to ensure that they deliver to our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we in this House are pushing towards E- Parliament, this is exactly what His Excellency, the President is pushing in various Sectors in the Public Service to see that we leverage technology to serve our people efficiently and diligently. I want to also state that leveraging technology not just in this House but also for the rest of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies in our Country will also help in delivering and to us meet the changing dynamics of the World as the World we are living in today is a digital World.

Mr Speaker, I will also like to address the Human Capital Development. The President emphasised on the Human Capital Developments by nurturing the skills of the 21st century is a visionary understanding of the dynamics of our World today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the area of Free Quality Education, I will like us all to pause for a second and reflect on the benefits of the Free Quality Education. In 2018, His Excellency, the President Julius Maada Bio allocated 22% of Government's budget to Education making accessible to 2,000,000 pupils across the Country. We all saw the establishment of new Universities like the Eastern Polytechnic in Kenema District, and vocational institutes across the Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have also all seen the students loan scheme that is been made accessible to all aspiring Sierra Leone University students across the Country, this is done on fair means as it is not based on political affiliations. The improvement made to our school curriculum for our kids in schools will help Sierra Leone compare to other Countries in the World as far as what our children learn around Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM], the effect will not be seen now but from 10 to 15 years we will all someday appreciate His Excellency, the President for his good strives towards education in this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, next is the Health Care advancement in our Country. To show His Excellency's commitments to the Health Care Sector in our Country, His Excellency, the President has improved on the budget from 6% to the Health Sector to 11.6% in this second term. During the last five years of the President's tenure, we all saw the rehabilitation of health facilities right across the Country with the mobile clinic is servicing over 20,000 Sierra Leonean patients, also there have been 5,000 recruitments of medical staff right across the Country, this is unprecedented as it transcends beyond party lines, ethnic and regional. Notwithstanding, all of the gains made to the Health Sector, there are still many more improvement to be made to see a healthy living Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, finally, as we all embark on this shared journey, we want to see a Sierra Leone that is progressive and devoid of ethnic, regional and political affiliations, I entreat us all as Honourable Members, to please support His Excellency, the President's agenda for not just feed Salone flagship programme but to ensure we have a better Sierra Leone. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Alice Sandy. Honourable Members, like I said this should be the end of today's sitting and the announcement except probably you have under S.O [23] submissions to make. I wish to adjourn now. Any Member, who want to say something under S.O [23]?

HON. SAA E. LAMINA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on S.O.[23] to draw the attention of SLRA for an assignment that falls under the Statutory responsibility to convey the news of the unkempt if not dilapidated road between Bamakonoya and Kondoma which is found in the Nimiyama Chiefdom as well as Monia to Njala Junction. There is about 150 meters that is currently unkempt and dilapidated for SLRA to look at it now to prevent accidents as well as it will save the much money of transporters to maintenance their vehicles, to the indulgence of this House under S.O [23], I call on SLRA to speedily look at that road leading to Kono District. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable Emerson Lamina. Any announcement?

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 11:30 a.m. and was adjourned to Wednesday 16th August, 2023 at
10:a.m. prompt]*