



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION - SECOND MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2019**

*SESSION – 2018/2019*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMETARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER:46**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.

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

PROPOSER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

BE IT RESOLVED:

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

## **IV. GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

[A] THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING CONVENTIONS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2018

[a] CONVENTION 97 – MIGRATION FOR EMPLOYMENT CONVENTION [REVISED] 1949.

[b] CONVENTION 143 – MIGRANT WORKERS [SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS] 1975

[c] CONVENTIONS 155 – OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, 1981

[d] CONVENTION 187 – PROMOTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH RECOMMENDATION, 2006

[e] MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION, 2006

[B] THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON FRIDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2018

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF SIERRA LEONE AND QCELL SIERRA LEONE LIMITED, DATED DECEMBER, 2017.



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

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

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

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**Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019.**

**I. PRAYERS**

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

*[The House met at 10:25 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

*[The Speaker, Hon. Dr Chernor Abass Bundu, in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before I put the question, let me wish all of us a very 'Happy New Year' and I hope and pray that our deliberations will be more productive and fruitful than they have ever been. I hope you are all energised and ready for 2019. Thank you.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand to amend the Order Paper to include item V on the Order Paper to read:

Parliamentary Summon

The Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board,

Pursuant to Section 95 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, you are requested to appear before Parliament and answer to allegations Levied against you by the Chairperson, Committee on Trade on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 At 10:00 a.m.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, the amendment you are proposing is 'parliamentary summon of the Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board?' Is that the amendment?

**HON MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Motion to amend the Order Paper to include item [V] has been adopted]*

**THE SPEAKER:** We now have item V on the Order Paper.

**II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SITTINGS HELD ON THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2019.**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4. Page 5?

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, I refer you to Roman figure v, under amendment of the Order Paper, the first line. I just want the spelling of constituency to be corrected.

**THE SPEAKER:** Noted, Honourable Member. Do you have any other observation or amendment? Page 6?

**HON. OSAIO KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, the same mistake is on Roman figure vii. The word 'constituency' is also spelt there.

**THE SPEAKER:** I wonder what computer was being used. It seems as if the computer does not recognise the 'constituency.'

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** I believe so, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, Clerk I hope you are taking note of these mistakes. Page 7? Page 8?

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** Again, the word 'finance' is wrongly spelt under Roman figure viii.

**THE SPEAKER:** Noted, Honourable Member. We might tend to blame the computer every time we see these typos, but quite honestly human error has something to do with these. I want to appeal to the Clerks-at-the-Table not to rely entirely on what comes out of their computers. They should try and proofread before these documents are presented here. It is an aspect that will be taken into account when efficiency and competence is being assessed. Page 9?

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, for consistency sake, we need to add Honourable Aaron A. Koroma's Constituency number.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, please take note. Page 10?

**HON. ALHAJI SORIEBA TURAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Mohamed Sheriff Carew raised an issue and he is supposed to be addressed here today the 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 and not Thursday.

**THE SPEAKER:** Noted, Honourable Member. I want to thank the Honourable Sorieba Turay for that amendment. He is commonly called 'Tamɛmkɔ.' Page 11?

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us look at Page 11, No. 11. Please look at the spelling of Masingbi. It should be 'M-a-s-i-n-g-b-i' and this Nimiyama Chiefdom is 'N-i-m-i-y-a-m-a.'

**THE SPEAKER:** Noted. Page 12? Is it 12 or 11.

**HON. OSAIO A. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, the constituency number for Honourable Rtd Capt. Hafiju Kanja is also omitted.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, this is more than just a technical mistake on the part of the computer. I will attribute all of these mistakes to human error and this does not tell well for the competence of your office. I hope we shall not see a repeat of such mistakes in future. It is very simple to proofread these documents.

**HON. SIRAJIN ROLLINGS-KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, the last line, under 21. It says: 'The Parliamentary Football team resumed training on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 at the Siaka Stevens National Stadium.' I think these are two names. It was National Stadium, but later changed to Siaka Stevens Stadium. It is a matter of consistency, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, what is the correct official name of the stadium?

**HON. SIRAJIN ROLLINGS-KAMARA:** It is Siaka Stevens Stadium.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thanks. Page 12?

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, before we go to Page 12. I am sorry to take you again to Page 10, after comments of Honourable Sahr Charles on the removal of security details of the former Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

**THE SPEAKER:** Where were you when we dealt with that page?

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** I tried, but there were Members of Parliament on the Floor and you could not recognise me. It reads: "**The Acting Speaker ordered that the Inspector-General of Police appeared before the Parliamentary Committee**



**on Internal Affairs on the issue of security personnel to the former Vice President, Chief Alhaji Samuel Sam Sumana and submit a report to the plenary.”** This is incorrect, Mr Speaker. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of reporting to the plenary today. That was the order of the Speaker on Thursday. The Committee is expected to present a report to the plenary on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. This was exactly what the Acting Speaker said.

**HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS:** Mr Speaker, thank God I am present today. I was not specific. I did not indicate a particular date.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am sure you do not want to put me in a situation where I have to choose between what you are telling me and what the presiding Speaker at the time is telling me.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, if the presiding Speaker then has made it clear that he did not say that they should appear today, I rest my case. We look forward to hearing from the Committee.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please rest your case.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, if there is no further correction or amendment, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of the Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 as amended?

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. NENNEH LEBBIE:** I second the Motion, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Parliamentary Sitting held on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 has been adopted as amended]*

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

PROPOSER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Twenty-Fifth Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service:

#### *1. Introduction*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting Presidential nominees to select the most fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices, met on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 and interviewed fourteen Presidential Nominees for the following appointments:

#### *2. Procedure*

The Committee relied on specified documents provided by the nominees and other information obtained from the general public to conduct the hearings. Pertinent questions put to the nominees were related to their educational backgrounds, track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and the nominees' visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were closely looked into by the Committee.

#### *3. Twenty-Eighth Sitting of the Committee on Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2019*

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

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I would like to read Section 11[1] of the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009. It says: **"There is hereby established a body to be known as the Minerals Advisory Board. The Chairman, who shall be a person knowledgeable and experienced in minerals and the mineral sector**

- a. the Director of Mines;**
- b. the Director of Geological Survey;**
- c. the Commissioner-General of the National Revenue Authority;**

- d. a representative of the Attorney-General and Minister of Justice;**
- e. a representative of the Ministry responsible for Local Government;**
- f. a representative from the Environmental Protection Agency;**
- g. the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for Mineral Resources**
- h. two persons with considerable qualifications and experience in the Mining Industry, generally one of whom shall be a woman.**
- i. a representative from the civil society, appointed by the coalition of civil societies in Sierra Leone;**
- j. the Chief of Defence Staff; and**
- k. the Inspector General of Police.”**

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House and the general public that the position for the Inspector General of Police to serve in this institution is not another appointment, but a statutory position.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, with your leave, the nominee has gone to use the gent.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you are going too fast. Mr Acting Leader, please take your seat. You referred us to the relevant provisions of the Mines and Minerals Act. Did you attempt to call the IGP to come for parliamentary approval?

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Yes, Mr Speaker because he appeared before the Committee on Appointments and Public Service.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do you really think he should come to the Well?

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** No sir because it is a Statutory appointment.

**THE SPEAKER:** That position is a statutory appointment. The IGP is a member of the Board, not by the discretion of the President, but by virtue of a provision. I will therefore rule that there is no need for him to come to the Well.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Order! And for the guidance of the Appointments Committee, I will now order that where such statutory appointments are made by virtue of an existing Act of Parliament, there is no need for that incumbent to be interviewed by the Committee. That is for your future guidance. On this particular point Honourable I.B Kargbo?

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** These are institutional representations, but you have just come up with a new ruling which is guiding us and is going to guide us. However, we want to make it very clear that a good number of people have passed through this House on the basis of being institutional representatives and at the same time they have gone through the Committee on Appointments. I just want us to note that this is a new ruling.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, if what you said is true, let us admit that that was a very serious error and let us agree that that error will now be dispensed from now on.

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** I am saying this is a new order from the Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is, Honourable Member.

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** Thank you very much.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to say this to the House through your good self that your position is noted and accepted, but I want to remind this House that in cases where the Statute specifically state that an individual like the IGP or Permanent Secretary etc. be on the board, but if that person nominates someone else, the person nominated will come to Parliament for approval. That is the exception.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please say that again, Honourable Member.

**HON CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** I was saying that if the IGP had nominated somebody else to represent him, that person would have to go through the Committee and this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Which he is not entitled to do because the Act is quite specific.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** No, Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that there are instances where they would say the Permanent Secretary or his nominee.

**THE SPEAKER:** Or his nominee?

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, but this is different.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Thank you very much.

**HON. OSMAN A. TIMBO:** Mr Speaker, there should be a distinction between institutional representation and positional representation. For instance, the Bar Association can send a representative, even though he is representing an institution, but he has to come to Parliament. But if the law says the Bank governor, the Inspector General of Police, etc. whom had already gone through Parliament they are automatically qualified for their positions.

**THE SPEAKER:** By virtue of the Act.

**HON. OSMAN A. TIMBO:** So, position representation is different from institutional position?

**THE SPEAKER:** I cannot agree more. So let us proceed.

*Suspension of S.O 5[2]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Acting Leader, please proceed. We will expunge that part of your report. You just have to indicate that the Inspector General of Police was nominated as a member.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Section 11[2] of the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009 gives the Inspector General of Police the authority to be a member of the Mineral Advisory Board by virtue of his position.

[i] Hon. P.C. Sallay Satta Gendemeh, proposed Member, National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA].

P.C. Honourable Sallay Satta Gendemeh is the Paramount Chief of Malegohun Chiefdom, Kenema District [1973 to date]. She served as Honourable Member of Parliament representing Kenema District from 1996 – 2000.

Reacting to probing question, Honourable P.C. Sallay Satta Gendemeh said: **“As a traditional ruler, I view my nomination as a unique opportunity for me to ensure that governance development assistance is evenly spread among the rural communities of this country. I promise to do my best in line with His Excellency the President’s dream for sustainable development.”**

[ii] Alhaji Foday B. Turay, proposed Member, Sierra Leone Police Council

Alhaji Foday B. Turay has over 30 years of broad range of professional experience in the Public Sector, Banking and Finance, UN Inter-Agency, NGO operations, as well as experience in Management, Education, Health and Sanitation, HIV/Aids, Food Security and Disaster Management.

Responding to the Committee’s promptings, Alhaji Foday Turay opined that that the Police needs reforms in the area of professionalism. **“I am a Human Resource professional; I have worked in the United Nations for 25 years doing personnel management and manpower Planning work. If I obtain the blessings of approval by this Honourable House, I will share my experience with other Members for the success of the Police Council,”** he said.

[iii] Dr Roland Eben Buck, proposed Member, Tertiary Education Commission

Dr Roland Eben Buck is the Managing Director and Consultant, Prime Solutions Management Consultants from 2002 to date. He is also a part-time lecturer [postgraduate] at IPAM and Fourah Bay College [2006 to date]. He was Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, North Carolina A & T State University. Dr Buck’s experiences in higher institutions of learning include his service as Executive Director, the Florida/West

Africa Linkage Institute, and University of North Florida. He was also Dean, Central Campus Programmes, University of California, and San Diego.

Commenting on the concerns of the Committee relating to the challenges facing the Tertiary Education Commission, Dr Roland Eben Buck said: **"I have worked in eleven tertiary institutions, six in America, one in Ghana and four in Sierra Leone. Secondly, looking through the Tertiary Education Commission Act, I have observed that the monitoring function of the Commission is not effective as per the legal instrument. Every three years,"** he said, **"the TEC is supposed to undertake inspection visits to each of the fifty institutions under its purview, to ensure that they meet all the regulations and requirements for tertiary education in Sierra Leone. I have been at my institution for five years but the TEC has never been there."**

Thirdly, there are no provisions for disabled students in the country, first in terms of educational materials and accessibility to facilities. **"Our tertiary institutions are not disabled friendly. I think that is another area that the Tertiary Education Commission needs to look into,"** he said.

*[iv] Engineer[Ing]. Georgette A.M. Greene, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Ports Authority*

Ing. Georgette A.M. Greene is currently pursuing courses to become a professional Chartered Civil Engineer. She is presently the Team Leader, Sierra Leone Institution of Engineers [SLIE], Africa Catalyst Project, and also the Director and Senior Project Engineer, Ron Greene Associates. She had previously served as Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA] 2015 – 2018.

Ing. Georgette Greene promised to work collaboratively with other Board Members to improve on the institutional and structural challenges of the Sierra Leone Ports.

[v] Mr Musa Mewa, proposed Member, Board of Directors, National Minerals Agency [NMA].

Mr Musa Mewa is Head of Chambers and Managing Partner, Brewah & Co – Mahitech Chambers [2018 to date]. He was once the Acting Director, “**Timap for Justice**” [2016 – 2018].

Answering to inquiring questions on what he would bring to the Board of the National Mineral Agency, Mr Musa Mewa said, “**As a lawyer, I have taken a look at the governing legislation, the National Minerals Agency Act of 2012. Section 3 of the Act has a requirement for compliance. As a lawyer on that Board, it is incumbent on me to ensure that there is full compliance with the laws pertaining to the proper management of mineral resources of this country.**”

[vi] Alhaji Mustapha B. Turay, proposed Member, Board of Directors, National Minerals Agency

Alhaji Mustapha Turay has over 46 years of experience in the diamond industry. He is the West Africa Director and Senior valuer for Diamond Counsellor International [DCI] and Sierra Leone’s foremost rough diamond expert. From 1995 to 1998, he was the General Manager of the Government Gold and Diamond Office [GGDO]; and from 2003 to date, he has been DCI’s Senior Representative as a Consultant Independent Diamond valuer [IDV] for Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

Alhaji Mustapha Turay was praised across party line as being adequately qualified for his proposed appointment because of his accumulated wealth of experience in the Mines and Mineral industry for over thirty years. He assured the Committee that with the cooperation of other Members of the Board, strategic policies will be put in place to ensure that Sierra Leone derives maximum benefit from its God-given endowments for sustainable development.

[vii] Rev. Fr. Martin Peter Leo Bassie, proposed Member, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC].

Rev. Fr Martin Peter Leo Bassie is a Catholic Priest at St. George’s Parish Murray Town, and Archdiocese of Freetown. He has also served as Parish Priest, St Columba Parish, Moyamba, from 2005 to 2007. Rev. Fr Martin Bassie assured the Committee that he



would work to the best of his ability to raise the SLBC to international standards in line with the President's dream for the nation.

*[viii] Ms Lucretia Mbogba, proposed Member, National Youth Commission*

Ms Lucretia Mbogba is the Executive Administrative Officer, World Vision International, Sierra Leone.

Answering to question as to what value she would add to the National Youth Commission, Ms Lucretia Mbogba said: **"I think women must be accepted as development partners if Sierra Leone is to develop. We women generally perform better than men. If I am approved by Honourable Members, I will look at the Act to see how I can factor women to perform pivotal roles to ensure service delivery."**

*[x] Ms Zainab Kamara, proposed Member, National Youth Commission.*

Ms Zainab Kamara is the Chief Executive Officer, Empowerment for Disability and Social Integration. Ms Zainab Kamara said that she would be working to enhance women's empowerment and development. **"As it is now,"** she said, **"women are very much marginalized in areas of employment, capacity building and promotions. So, we will look at the Act to see how we can put structures in place to maintain gender parity. Secondly, I think people living with disabilities, especially women on wheelchairs are going to be my primary focus. We are going to see how we can capacitate them."**

*[xi] Mr Mohamed Kanneh, proposed Member, National Youth Commission*

Mr Mohamed Kanneh is the Coordinator, National Literacy and Debate Association. He has previously served as Secretary to Parliamentary Affairs, Mano River Union Youth Parliament.

Commenting on the role youths play in nation building and development, Mr Mohamed Kanneh said: **"It is very much clear that young people form the bulk of the population and these young people are the root, fruits and the future leaders**

**of this country. There is no way this country can develop without the active participation of youths that constitute bulk of the population."**

*[xii] Mr Saidu Alie Lakoh, proposed Member, National Youth Commission [NYC]*

Mr Saidu Alie Lakoh is a teacher at the Government Secondary School for Girls, Mathora and Acting Head of Department from 2016 to 2018.

Responding to probing questions, Mr Saidu Lakoh said: **"The youth as future leaders are fundamental in nation building because we form the majority of the population of this country. The nation needs to prepare the youths through capacity building, for our future role of pushing this nation forward."**

*[xiii] Mr Malcolm Gabriel Mannah Kpana, proposed Member, National Youth Commission [NYC].*

Mr Malcolm Gabriel Mannah Kpana is the Secretary General, Sierra Leone Association of the Blind from 2017 to date; and a teacher, Prince of Wales Senior Secondary School, Kingtom, Freetown. [2010 to date]

Answering to probing questions, Mr Malcolm Kpana said that the President, in his inaugural speech, had promised to cater for disabled students. **"The Youth Commission is the platform for youth advocacy in Sierra Leone. As a youth living with disability and being visually impaired, I have not been able to read to Act because it is not in braille. My primary focus on the Commission would be on youths with disabilities,"** he said.

*[xiv] Mr Sahr Tamba Nyalloma, proposed Member, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC]*

Mr Sahr T. Nyalloma is a lecturer and instructor in Mechanical and Maintenance Engineering, Fourah Bay College from 2005 to date. He has previously served as a part time Physics Laboratory Instructor, Lourdes College, Sylvania, O.H [January 2005 – May 2005], Teaching Assistant, Mechanical Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering Department [MIME] University of Toledo, O.H, USA.

In his interview, Sahr Tamba Nyalloma said: **“The challenges I have observed with the SLBC is the quality of transmission relative to private Broadcasting stations like AYV. I noticed that the private Broadcasting stations are performing better than the National Broadcasting station. I have spoken to the Director General who has highlighted some of the issues to me. If I am approved by Honourable Members, I will work with fellow Board members to remedy the problems to ensure that the SLBC functions well. We may need better equipment and more training for the staff,”** he said.

### *5. Recommendation[s]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential Nominees to be fit and qualified for their proposed appointments and they are recommended to the House for approval:

[i] Hon. P. C. Sallay Satta Gendemeh, proposed Member, National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA];

[ii] Alhaji Mustapha B. Turay, proposed Member, National Minerals Agency;

[iii] Mr Roland Eben Buck, proposed Member, Tertiary Education Commission;

[iv] Ing. Georgette Greene, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Ports Authority;

[v] Mr Musa Mewa, proposed Member, Board of Directors, National Minerals Agency;

[vi] Alhaji Foday B. Turay, proposed Member, Police Council;

[vii] Rev. Fr. Martin Peter Leo Bassie, Member Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation;

[viii] Ms Lucretia Mbogba, proposed Member, National Youth Commission;

[ix] Ms Zainab Kamara, proposed Member, National Youth Commission;

[x] Mr Mohamed Kanneh, Member, National Youth Commission;

[xi] Saidu Alie Lakoh, Member, National Youth Commission;

[xii] Mr Malcon Gabriel Mannah Kpana, Member, National Youth Commission [NYC];

[xiii] Ing. Sahr Tamba Nyalloma, Member, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone; Broadcasting Corporation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Twenty-Fifth Report is the unanimous decision of the Committee. I therefore move that the Twenty-Fifth Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any Seconder?

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we are doing is a routine exercise in terms of scrutinising and approving nominees of the President to serve in various capacities. These nominees have gone through the Committee on Appointments; therefore, we have no doubt in their ability to perform. They are qualified for the respective positions they were nominated. I must say that some of these nominees we know their past in terms of where they have served all these years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the report presented to us by the Acting Leader of Government Business, we have no doubt that people like Mr Buck, Alhaji Foday B. Turay and Mustapha Turay, are fine gentlemen. They are qualified for their respective positions they have been nominated to serve. I would like to remind them that without the approval of this House, they will not assume those positions.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to restate here that these nominees have gone through the Committee on Appointments and they are qualified to occupy those positions. Therefore we cannot take much more because we have wasted enough time before we got here. So, I call on my colleagues to approve these nominees. We have no doubt in their qualifications and abilities to perform as expected for the people of Sierra Leone. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member and I thank him especially for the last observation about the need for us to respect that we are running against time. On that note, I would be disposed to take only few speakers.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I will not take much of our time. These are fine nominees who are capable people being nominated by His Excellency the President to various Boards or Parastatals. Mr Speaker, please permit me to say few words about a colleague and a brother; i.e., Mr Musa Mewa. Mr Musa Mewa is a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of Sierra Leone. He is also a devout Muslim. I usually say that if one is to look for gentlemen in Sierra Leone, you will make no mistake if you start with him. He is a gentleman who is full of integrity and respect for others.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Mewa has been nominated to serve on the Mines and Minerals Agency. I have been dealing with that Commission as a result of my profession. My admonition is that please make sure we have a one stop spot, so that when investors come to take their certificates or their export licences, it will not be a hazardous and cumbersome exercise. What we normally envisage is that if you are taking an export license, you have to go to Immigration Department for your residence permit, Police Clearance and bank statement. We can make it easier by having one stop where all these documents are issued. This will shorten the time and avoid waste of energy. I am saying this because investors do not have all the time to spend within our jurisdiction to set up those administrative structures. I have no doubt, by the grace of Allah, that you would do this nation proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the nominees who have been nominated to the Youth Commission. I want to remind you that there are youth in Constituency 003 and we want your activities or programmes to transcend beyond Freetown, Bo, and Makeni. We want to see and feel your presence in every part of Sierra Leone. Youth problems are not only in Freetown. We want to see a proper decentralisation of the Youth Commission. We want to feel the presence of the Commission in our constituencies, so when we come here, the youth in our constituencies will know that we represent them. We want to see total decentralisation of the Human Rights Commission, Youth Commission and Children Commission. We want them in every locality. What we have noticed in the past and in present times is the fact that all of

these offices are in Freetown. If you go to my Constituency, they do not even have any knowledge with regards to the existence of a Youth Commission, the Human Rights Commission or the Children Commission. So, we want to call on you to ensure that these Commissions are decentralised if approved by this House. Please, go there and work with Commissioners, so that your presence is felt in every part of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not take much of your time because these nominees are capable and determined to make this House proud. When I was a student, I always said if I were to become a principal, I would take more women to teach in my school than men because women are disciplined. They always stand against issues that affect certain institutions.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on my colleagues to approve these nominees, so that they can go to their various offices and start work. I thank you very much.

**HON. P.C. FATMATA B.M. KAJUE KOROMA IV:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just want to thank the Committee for their patience interviewing these nominees. They must have taken their time to go through all the documents submitted by the nominees. I hope and pray that they will do exactly what they told the Committee after parliamentary approval. I want to also thank the President for nominating the Honourable Paramount Chief to serve in that position. She is one of the most experienced and oldest amongst Paramount Chiefs. I hope she will take along the experiences she has mustered over the years to that Commission, so that things work the way they should work. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, brevity can be a virtue and I will want that brevity to continue.

**HON. P.C. KANGBAI JOE MACAVORAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will recall that since we started approving presidential nominees, this is the second time a Paramount Chief is nominated. The first Paramount Chief nominee was for Board of the Bank of Sierra Leone. Well, I am not going to say much about this particular nominee. I

know she has the ability and the capacity to surprise people. We are only going to thank the President and to remind him that there are seven million Sierra Leoneans and 190 of them are Paramount Chiefs. Like Oliver Twist, we are asking for more. I thank you.

**HON. EMILIA LOLLOH TONGI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to congratulate all the nominees this morning. All of them are qualified for the positions they have been nominated to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to start with Ms Zainab Kamara, proposed Member, National Youth Commission. Mrs Zainab Kamara has promised to enhance, improve and develop the women of this country. I want to remind her that we are asking for **30%** and we are coming up gradually. The Parliamentary Female Caucus President and the rest of the female parliamentarians in this Well have promised to come together and pay regular visits to all female appointees. This is because we want to work together and enhance our productivity through experience sharing. There are looming challenges, but if we visit them on regular bases, I think some of those challenges could be overcome. We have lost Dr Sarah Bendu and we cannot afford to lose more.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Alhaji Mustapha B. Turay. Mr Mustapha B. Turay has been working for over 46 years. If everything goes well, he will probably work for another five years, which will eventually take him to 51 years. I am saying this because this is a diamond country and Sierra Leone is known for diamonds. Let start to sell our finished products from diamond in this country. The star of Sierra Leone would have actually created an industry where we can do our finishing. They sell our finished products to these people. I went to Volga Mega in Brussels and I met a client and he showed me all the diamonds they have been buying from Sierra Leone. I took a diamond and I asked how much they usually buy one. He said when he came to Sierra Leone, he bought it at **\$45,000** and he was selling it at **\$167,000**. We have the resources to develop our own industry like South Africa. In South Africa, they have their

polishing industry. So, it is high time we establish same in this country. Let us put these ideas into practice for the benefit of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the nominees to work towards decentralising the mining industry in this country. We should have a polishing office in Sierra Leone. I think this will provide enough revenue for the Government. As a country, Sierra Leone is losing a lot of money. I was actually praying for the Speaker to catch my eye, so that I would bring these issues to the House.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the nominees that our buyers in Brussels could help to establish an industry here. I hope you would take my request in good faith. Thank you very much.

**HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO** [*Acting Leader of the Opposition*]: Mr Speaker, we are here again to perform a statutory function. Mr Speaker, without exhibiting any arrogance, I refer you to Page 1, the third line. The word most 'fitted' should be replaced with the word 'suitable.' Most fitted is not the best type of English we pass on to people.

**THE SPEAKER:** It sounds very carpentry.

**HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, perhaps 'suitable' would have been more appropriate. I thank you for recognising and accepting that observation. Mr Speaker, we are part of the process that screened the nominees and we are satisfied that the nomination of the Paramount Chief, Honourable PC Sallay Gendemeh was a suitable nomination. For those of us who have studied the recent political development in this country, the great lady is recognised as one who has participated in the development of this country. Also, her motherly posture cannot be ignored. If you go to her Chiefdom, she wants to be friendly with everybody. Therefore, I feel happy that these attributes of a hard working Sierra Leonean and of motherly figure have been taken into consideration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Alhaji Mustapha B. Turay, proposed Member, National Minerals Agency. He is also a very good nominee. I know him because he is a



very efficient expert in the diamond industry. I say this with all honesty because we have worked at the National Diamond Cooperation when I was a member of the Board of Directors of the NDMC. He always served his people well. Therefore, nominating him to serve in such capacity is not a surprise at all. In fact, somebody whispered to me that he should have been the head of the Mineral Agency in this country, taking into consideration his experience and his background.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I discovered that the Government has not ignored the Catholic Mission by nominating for Martin Bassie. I think this is the second time we are approving a Priest. However, they are not selected because they are Christians, but because they are professionals.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I do not know why your colleagues across the aisles are trying to deliberately distract you.

**HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, I think they recognise my importance. In fact, they are applauding me. They are not distracting me at all. In any case, thank you for the concern, Mr Speaker. I would go by your advice that time is not on our side. I want to make it very clear that all the nominees are accepted and recognised by us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Mr Roland Eben Buck, proposed Member, Tertiary Education Commission. We entered university the same day; and today, he is a very important figure in academia. He has lectured in many universities and continues to be a very important person in the field of academia. In his youthful days, he was also a very important personality. He was a well-known sportsman in Sierra Leone who represented this country. Again, I am satisfied and this is very good nomination. We hope that he will utilise his knowledge and experience to be part of the institution to which he has been nominated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the nominees for the Youth Commission. I want to state here that the Youth Commission in this country has the potential to address most of the problems of our youth in this country. This country belongs to the youth of Sierra Leone. In a very short time, a good number of the positions in this

country are going to be occupied by the youth, but it is now that we must mentor them. It is now we should make them to understand that they will take over the leadership of this country one day. I want to admonish the youth who are degrading themselves, believing that they are not important, to know that they are making a mistake. They are very important and I believe the Youth Commission will be tailored in order to accommodate them. We want to put them in a state of readiness for the future development of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to state that in future, we may have to further raise the bar in terms of screening presidential nominees because this is what the public expects us to do. They think we are approving nominees without proper scrutiny. We have to be asking technical questions, so as to make sure that whoever goes through the process, goes through it in such an acceptable manner by even members of the public we represent here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you do so on this occasion?

**HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO:** We did so, Mr Speaker and I am just emphasising the fact that we would continue to do so.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to state that the nominees can go and begin to work. If they begin to work, they should not forget the fact that they started their careers from here. If any nominee goes to an office and thinks that his/her business is to insult Members of Parliament, he/she is making a mistake. I thank you very much.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA [*Acting Leader of Government Business*]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Chairman and Leader to be for the APC in the coming convention, Honourable Alhaji Ibrahim Ben Kargbo. We wish him all the best. Mr Speaker, we on the Government Bench are doing our best to work in the interest of Sierra Leoneans. This is because we have not put square pegs in round holes. Praises from both sides of the aisles of this House have exonerated us. This shows that we are doing the job expected of us. If our nominees are being praised by

colleagues on the other side, it means I do not have much to say, but to congratulate the nominees who are about to be approved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I start with Rev. Fr Martin Bassie. Rev. Fr Martin Bassie is my knight brother. He is one of the few good Christians I have ever met. They have prayed for us at Saint Anthony Parish at Savage Street and we realised that he is a real man of God. Today, the population in that church had quadrupled. The President is not giving positions to people in the Catholic faith because they are priests, but because they are qualified. These are carefully ordained priests. We have people who have behaved professionally in different areas. For instance, Mr Musa Mewa has served in various capacities. In his interview, he said: **"I am going to look at the Act and enforce compliance."** He wants the Government to generate more revenue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am a friend of the physically challenged and visually impaired persons. I have them in my Constituency and we need to make this building disabled friendly. This building is not disabled friendly and we were reminded by Miss Kamara when she said: **"Honourable Members, I am really disappointed. You make laws you have all these laws in place, but this building is not disabled friendly."** We had to apologise for this, Mr Speaker. We want you to use your good office to consider this issue when renovating this building. Please look into the accessibility of this building by disabled people. Mr Clerk, please take note of that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Leader of the Opposition Leader said we have done a very good job. Indeed we are doing a very good job and that was why every Member of Parliament showered praises on the nominees. Well, this also shows that we are working in unison. We are no longer giving positions to people because of political patronage, but because of the trust we have in them. The Chief Whip of the Opposition did a very good job in his contribution and I want to thank him for that. I hope they will respect Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know you are a man who respects the rule of law and you even discipline Members of Parliament. No Member of Parliament has decried or criticised these nominees. All of us praised the nominees, but as soon as they

assume offices, they tend to disrespect Members of Parliament. I do not know what is the mystery surrounding Members of Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Coming events cast their shadow.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** I will leave that for now Mr Speaker. If you say you are a responsible Government, it should not be by word, but action. I think we on this side will have the responsibility through the Speaker to tell the nominees that we are not satisfied with them. I thank you very much for your contributions and I hope and pray that these nominees will be approved by this Honourable House.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** It is now my very pleasant duty to add my own voice of congratulations and felicitations to the new appointees. I will want similarly to add my own voice of appreciations and thanks to His Excellency the President for a very inclusive set of nominations that he has submitted to this Parliament. We thank him and I do not think we can master words sufficiently enough to express how very pleased we are about the inclusiveness, the quality and the capacity of the new appointees. We wish them well in their assignments and we have no doubt that they will excel and live up to the expectations of the President, this House and the general public. We thank you.

#### **IV. GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:**

[A] THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

**HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III:** Mr Speaker, I want to observe sir. I want to bring to the notice of Parliament and to you particularly we have made all these observations before. When I first came to Parliament in 1996, the Order Paper used to be delivered at our homes; but after 1996 and 2002, we do not know any longer what we are coming to do. I want to challenge Members of Parliament on these Conventions we are about to discuss. How can we debate them intelligently? Are we here to rubber stamp? Mr Speaker, when Mr Carpenter was the Clerk of this House, they used to

produce the Order Paper a week ahead of time. They delivered them to our homes. They have vehicles or motorbikes that used to go to our homes and deliver them. So, I will not sit down here knowing nothing about what is going to be debated.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to you to also think along that line. This is the 'New Direction' and we are expecting the Order Papers to be delivered to our homes. In the past also, we used to condemn this, but that has never changed. I could remember also in 1962, as a small boy, my uncle as Deputy Minister of Lands, Mines and Labour used to take his documents from home. I want the House to support me, so that we get the Order Paper ahead of time. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I think what the Honourable Paramount Chief has just observed is extremely important. He is certainly not the first Member who has drawn my attention to this. The Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella has persistently drawn my attention to this problem. This is becoming a perennial problem and we have to put an end to it. I do not really know who is to be blamed, whether the blame should be put squarely with the Leader of Government Business who does not prepare the Order Paper in time or the blame should be put squarely on the administration of this Parliament. I do not know which of the two bears the greatest responsibility. However, I want to order that we defer consideration of item IV until Honourable Members have received copies of the relevant international conventions. They have to read and digest them before they come to this Chamber.

**HON. MATTEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, with your leave, the documents were laid on the 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.

**THE SPEAKER:** Which document are you talking about, Honourable Member?

**HON. MATTEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, all documents. I think Members do not have the documents presently, but the Order Paper was distributed on Monday. They may not have the documents now, but they were laid on the 4<sup>th</sup> December. So, we can allow them to go and look for their documents because they have them already.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before we started this sitting, I congratulated all of us and extended warm felicitations to all of us for the 'New Year.' I even went on to say that I do hope and pray that 2019 would be full of energy and productivity on the part of all of us in this House. I have used one statement before and I am going to use it again that 2019 is going to be a watershed. I keep saying that this is not a rubber stamp Parliament and I mean every word of that statement. Let nobody believe that any document can be presented here and have it passed just like that. This Parliament, consistent with the spirit and objectives of the 'New Direction,' is ready to lend a hand in making a big difference in the development of this country. So, we defer consideration of item IV [A] until further notice. We would maintain item IV [B] on the Order Paper. I hope the Minister is here and ready.

**HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO:** Mr Speaker, I want to thank you, but I also want to remind this noble House that it is easier for them to use all our emails and send the Order Paper there. It is also easier to use 'WhatSapp' and send the Order Paper. This is the age of technology and we have to use it. When I was a member of the delegation to the Pan-Africa Parliament, we got all information about the Pan-Africa Parliament from our email. So, I want to appeal to you to use the technology to send these documents. I thank you Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, do you have the email of every Member of Parliament? Do we have a parliamentary WhatSapp group? I have been informed that there is a parliamentary WhatSapp group. I think the hard copy of the Order Paper will be made available physically and on WhatSapp. This will truly enhance the proceedings of this House. Honourable Paramount Chief, I sincerely thank you for drawing our attention to this important problem.

#### B. THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

**MR MOHAMED RADO SWARRAY** [*Minister of Information and communication*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following memorandum of understanding, which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2018:

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Qcell Sierra Leone Limited, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2019.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present this Motion this morning before you in view of the fact that the world is now defined by competition. At the very peak of this nation's Information Communication Technology [ICT] boom, we have four mobile companies operating in this country. Today, the entrance of Qcell is going to bring it back to form. Already, we have a very abysmal statistics when it comes to ITC and broad band penetration. We have about **70%** mobile phone coverage across the country, but when it comes to internet penetration; it is as dismal and abysmal as **15%**. We believe that the entry of a new player known for forcing prices and also known for being selfless will help improve the competition and help Government achieve the acceleration of broad band and ITC penetration in underserved communities across the country. That is one reason why we wish that this Honourable House will ratify this Agreement.

Furthermore, the Qcell group already operates in the Gambia. They intend building a Qcell Headquarters in Freetown, so that Gambia and other operational areas would be serviced from Freetown. So that in itself bringing reliable and sustainable foreign direct capital into Sierra Leone. I am told in my findings that the group CEO of Qcell studied at Fourah Bay College himself an alumnus and he is very keen, eager and cannot wait to give back to Sierra Leone. In my private conversations with him, he even intends to do his major commercial launch at Fourah Bay College after rehabilitating few structures. Therefore, that is a direct way of giving back to a place where you got your higher education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also like to ask that this memorandum be ratified on grounds that in the first ten years of the operations, they intend to ensure that about **90%** employees are Sierra Leoneans, including top level appointments. So, these operations and investments in GSM broad band connectivity and fast speed internet connectivity would make our rankings improve on ease of doing business, particularly when it comes to ratifying indications like ITC penetration in the country.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following memorandum of understanding which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> December 2018:

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Qcell Sierra Leone Limited, Dated 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2017.

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before the debate begins, I want to commend the Honourable Minister for the brief introduction he has made. He also made pertinent observation with regards encouraging competition by all of us. Let me bring to the attention of this House my own personal experience recently. I travelled out of this country on the 1<sup>st</sup> with my phone on roaming. I was astonished to note that I received a call from anywhere in the world to my number, I also pay for receiving that call. It was not only the caller paying for his or her call, but as the receiver of the call, I also paid for it. I also discovered that even when I switched off my phone at night, by the time I woke up in the morning and switched it on, I discovered that maybe fifty thousand or hundred thousand units has disappeared. I do not know what was happening at all. I think the answer to our problem as I see it right now lies in not only competition, but intensifying competition among the service providers in the telecommunication industry. Mr Minister, let us encourage an intensifying competition in this area. The debate is now open.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have in front of us the Minister of Information who laid this document in the Well of this House for us to give approval to another Communication Company. As the saying goes, 'the more the merrier.' I am sure if we have more people competing to build clientele, automatically they will improve their standards of communication. The question is who benefits at the end of the day? It is the consumers and we are the consumers and we will encourage more people to invest in this area. The Minister spoke about the local content aspect of that particular industry and this will encourage more Sierra Leoneans to be employed in these institutions over the years. According to the Minister, up to **90%** of the personnel



will be Sierra Leoneans in ten years. This means it is going to create jobs for our people. This could also mean looking at the future aspect of the institution, which is very encouraging for Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was fortunate to witness the installation of Qcell's equipment some time ago and I can categorically state here that what I saw was encouraging. Mr Speaker, if that is what we are going to expect, I am sure Qcell is going to add value to our communication system. Qcell is going to inspire other mobile operators to improve their services. If you have limited service providers, it means you have very limited alternative or choices to make. If Africell or Orange fails to provide quality service, I have an option to join Q-cell. This was why I said the more the merrier. This is to enhance our connectivity. In fact, I have heard praises from people who have already bought the SIM card from Q-cell. They said Qcell's data is reliable and very fast. I hope they are doing it not because they want to get clientele, but because they are here to stay.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we will give them support as long as they maintain the quality of service we deserve. We have been complaining and even went to court about poor network. There were several complaints being directed to the parliamentary Committee on Information and Communications due to poor network. We hope we will not encounter such problem with Q-cell. The equipment I saw are Huawei and they have been installed at King Harman Road in Freetown. I think those are quality equipment.

Having said that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore my colleagues to ratify this Agreement. I am sure Qcell will improve from time to time, especially with the Local Content Policy. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. Today, we have been called upon to ratify the memorandum of understanding between Government and Qcell. Let me make it abundantly clear that in as much as we have the power to ratify, we also have the power to review this Agreement. Therefore, the promises that

have been given to us by the Minister are well noted. If those promises are not fulfilled, we will definitely review the Agreement.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I am a little bit dumbfounded when the Government Minister laid this Agreement on the Table for ratification and an Opposition Member praising it. Like what Honourable Hassan A. Sesay has done, I am not sure if we have much to say. However, I am a subscriber of Q-cell. I bought **Le 5000** megabyte and I used it for almost a week.

**THE SPEAKER:** You mean that you are already using it?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Yes sir, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Even before we ratify this Agreement?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, the ratification is different. In fact, this network has been launched by the President. The ratification is different from the network itself, Mr Speaker. I can assure this House, including the Speaker that nobody in this country will regret using this Qcell. I want to assure this House that this Company is going to create a healthy competition in this country. They are not only going to give us facility to call, but they will provide internet facility after the ratification of this memorandum. They also have the opportunity to introduce the digital system of the Qcell.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we on this side are satisfied with Honourable Hassan A. Sesay's explanation. I believe if this memorandum is ratified today, Qcell will give us the necessary competition and they will provide better and affordable network than all the networks in this country. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. Mr Minister, I spoke about the power of Parliament to review Agreements, not only this one, but that power can also be applied to the existing providers. And I want that to be clearly understood. The public is very dissatisfied with the quality of services of the existing service providers and we are waiting for an improvement of those services or Parliament will do the needful.

**HON. VERONICA K. SESAY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as one time Chairperson of Committee on Information and Communications, we faced many complaints about the poor quality of network in the country. We believed that everywhere you go you should be able to talk to everybody in this country. We have had several operators and they have giving lots of excuses. Some would tell you because of high tension or some other reasons, you cannot speak to other parts of the country. The good news is that Qcell is coming and we appreciate them. We believe in competition because if there is no competition, people will tend to be lethargic and lackadaisical. We have mobile operators in this country who will promise to provide incentive for particular holidays, but they are profiteering and exploiting the people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy for Qcell, I want to caution them that we do not want a repeat of the Tigo and Comium episodes. We do not want you to use bankruptcy as an excuse to foldup. You have heard from other Honourable Members and this House will continue to support and monitor you. We want you to deliver to the expectations of the people of this country.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want NATCOM to monitor all mobile operators in this country. The issue of network is a problem in this country and sometimes when you call somebody, they usually say: **"the number you are calling is either switched off or out of coverage area."** We do not want to hear this at all from Qcell. We believe with those sophisticated equipment and what we have heard about Qcell, you are up to the task. We want you to do something different, so that our people in our villages will stop climbing trees to make calls. I think I have met you and you promised to collaborate with SIERRATEL. I think that is good. Please ensure that our people in the villages stop climbing trees in search of network. It is their right to access network even in their farms. If the maxim, 'communication is power,' then make sure you live up to expectations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a trade Chairperson, we will once in a while visit you to see your facilities and to see how many Sierra Leoneans are employed in your

company. We would like to know if you are implementing the Local Content Policy. I call on my colleagues to give Qcell a try. In Temne, it is known as 'tamemko,' or trial. We are the voice of the voiceless or the voice of the people and we are representing thousands of people. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. I hope this is also a forewarning to the Committee on Information and Communications. Please take note of what is being said, particularly with regard to the existing service providers. The public is very unhappy with the quality of their service and your Committee should call them to task.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, when issues of communication are mentioned, I will not only limit it to Qcell and what they have done within this short period within the market, but it is also an opportunity to inform this House and other mobile operators that I come from a constituency wherein **95%** of my people do not access communication at all. Mr Speaker, anytime I go to my constituency, people usually try to reach me but to no avail because there is no network at all. There is no network in the entire Masongbala, Kambia section and Monotala. The only time I could boast of network is when I come to the main road leading to Kambia District. Therefore, this is an opportunity for me to inform Qcell to consider that area. It is a marketing area and it is a virgin land. That is the area supplying the Bamoi Luma, which is the local market. All business transactions are undertaken in my constituency, but it is the least developed constituency in the country. People come from Mattru Jong, Guinea and other parts of the country. So, I want to appeal to Qcell to use this opportunity to access the population of Bamoi Luma.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do we have representatives from Qcell? If they are here, they should take note of what is being said.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, this is an opportunity for them. Apart from my Constituency, Kambia District also has a very weak network. Sometimes people prefer using a mobile company from Guinea than using any of our current mobile operators in Sierra Leone. It is an insult to us as a people. In Kambia District, we buy

top-up cards in France Guinea instead of Leones. The network from Guinea is much better in Kambia District than Africell and Orange. So, Kambia District this is an opportunity for Qcell to establish as fast as possible because we badly needed their services.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there has been queues all over the town, especially the youth, including students who were going for Qcell SIM card. As Honourable Members of Parliament, we will not queue for SIM cards. Therefore, if they want to extend their services to Members of Parliament, they should come to Parliament. I think this will be a laudable venture for even our administrative staff. Special numbers will be very much encouraging for Members of Parliament, especially when carrying their Constituency numbers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I saw the Order Paper, I recalled that this Agreement was passed in 2017 and the Minister of Information then was Honourable Mohamed Bangura, who is presently with us. If such Agreement was discussed in the form of a Bill and one of the pioneers is a Member of Parliament, I think we need to recognise and give him that respect [*Applause*]. This is why we say Government is continuity.

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not think the Honourable Member deserves any special recognition. We are now discussing something for which he was responsible. I expected him to ensure that he catches my eye and enlighten us about the Agreement that we are about to ratify, rather than not saying anything.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** On that note, Mr Speaker, I will stop to give you more time to give him opportunity to have a bite on this.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not only contributing to this debate because I am a Member of Parliament and we ought to contribute to debate that are brought here in Parliament, but because I am a telecommunication engineer who has practiced for the past 12 years. Mr Speaker, the longevity and productivity of any telecommunication company is contingent on their background

work. People are saying that Smart came and vanished away. Well, this was due to the fact that Smart established only forty sites, while Africell and Airtel had over three hundred sites. You cannot just restrict your communication facilities to the city alone, but also to the people in the provinces. I want to implore the Ministry to ensure that when a mobile company wants to establish in this country, they must have a data to show the number of sites and must have established in a number of district headquarter towns before they are allowed to operate. Again, the mobile company must employ certain number of Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second thing I want to talk about is that I have seen instances wherein riggers in these companies are not well taken care of. Well, for those who are not engineers, riggers are the workers who usually climb the towers to rectify problems. There are safety precautions they should take into consideration, like wearing their protective gears. These protective gear prevent you from falling down or hurting yourself while on duty. Most mobile companies do not have protective gears for their riggers. I took up a case in which somebody was working for a mobile company. The person fell down from hundred meters tower and the person lost his life. Mr Speaker, nothing was done about it. I would like to advise Qcell to put modalities in place, so that the lives of the ordinary Sierra Leoneans are protected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is disappointing and heart-breaking to note that in the midst of those bonanza organised by these mobile companies like 'keke, one hundred million, two hundred billion, three hundred billion, etc. their staff are not well taken care of at all [*Applause*]. They have all sorts of promotions but their staff are not well taken care of, Mr Speaker. I can put it to you that Sierra Leoneans who are working for Airtell, now called Orange and Africell are not well catered for. I told you earlier that I worked for a mobile company and I faced similar challenge. Mr Speaker, you will surprise to note when the mobile company I was working for had wanted to close down, we brought the issue to the knowledge of the parliamentary Committee on Information and Communications, but the issue was treated with levity and carelessness. No due consideration was given to that until the company closed down.

So, I want this House to implore the mobile operators in this country to ensure that they take care of Sierra Leoneans who are working for them.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that these mobile companies are protected because they have government officials who are protecting them instead of protecting the workers. I am not apprehensive, but I am assuming that Qcell may have created such links with the Government. Please, I do not want you to use your links to victimise poor Sierra Leoneans.

**THE SPEAKER:** But you are here to represent the interest of those poor Sierra Leoneans.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** That is why I am saying this without hesitation. I want to advise Qcell to take good care of our people. They are your assets and they are our people. If Sierra Leone is to boast of anything, it is not the natural resources we have, but the human resources we have. These are the people who are going to revolutionise those natural resources for them to be productive. We do not want to see a situation wherein after they have worked, they are abandoned recklessly. This happened when Comium was operating in this country. As we speak, employees are yet to receive their benefits. I implore all of us to put the interest of all staff first. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank you very much for your very erudite contribution to this debate.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We are here today for the ratification of Qcell. Two years ago, Qcell came to this country, exploring the possibility to operate in Sierra Leone. The CEO of Qcell is a Gambian/Sierra Leonean. All the top management level staff was Sierra Leoneans. I realised that Qcell would work within the ambits of the Local Content Policy. As a Minister then, I stood by them and made sure that they established in Sierra Leone. Looking at the structure of their company, it is good for us to have Qcell. I think we should have another company for the sake of healthy competition.

**THE SPEAKER:** But that is a very serious self-indictment you are making.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, this was why I brought Qcell in the market. In the area of tariff, I realised that Africell and Orange had very high tariffs. Qcell has a very good tariff.

**THE SPEAKER:** How good, Honourable member?

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, you really need Qcell.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please tell the public how good is Qcell.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** If you compare Qcell to Africell or Orange, you will tell the difference. You will note that Qcell is better than those two mobile operators.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, of course you are at liberty to extol the virtues of Qcell, but I hope you are not digging a hole for yourself.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, Qcell will train our brothers and sisters to work in the industry. They will create employment and they have indicated their intentions to establish their headquarters in Freetown, which they have already done. I know that in the next few months, you will prove me right that Qcell is here to stay. It is not going to be business as usual. With the current Minister of Information, I know he will hold them to task if they renege on their tasks and promises.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you already stated that the network of these companies is bad and they even over charge their customers. I want Qcell to note the many concerns been expressed by Members of Parliament and we want them to broaden their operations for our people in the provinces. The Honourable Member from Masongbala spoke extensively about poor coverage in his constituency. It is not the primary responsibility of the company, but with the UADF, we will get there.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, do not also forget Sanda Magbolonto.

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Indeed, Mr Speaker. I would like to advise Members to buy Qcell. As the Honourable Member stated earlier, they need to bring the SIM cards to Parliament. I thank you very much.



**HON. OSMAN A. KARGBO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start by thanking the Minister and the 'New Direction' Government for continuing with this Agreement or memorandum of understanding. Like we have always said, Government is continuity. In this connection, you on that side and the Minister of Finance have been saying that you would continue to implement Agreements or projects that is good. That is governance and I applaud the Minister and the 'New Direction' Government for recognising the fact that competition is necessary and essential for better conditions of Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the current Minister and the erstwhile Minister, Honourable Mohamed Bangura for creating the enabling environment or for encouraging these investors to invest in Sierra Leone. We know many investors have come before and have flew away. We have heard about Comium. They were here, but stop operations. Also, other companies were here, but they did not continue. Well, maybe the enabling environment was not created for them to operate. I thank the Honourable Mohamed Bangura for doing exactly what he was asked to do. I also want to thank the CEO of this company. I am reliably informed that he studied in Sierra Leone and for him to come and invest here again is a blessing. We want to thank him as a nation. He is a young man and we want to thank him for choosing Sierra Leone. He must have gone through some difficulties in the course of investing in Sierra Leone, but he endured.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also know that Government is not the biggest employer in any country. Where Government becomes the biggest employer, it becomes difficult for Government to maintain that status quo. In that regard, bringing these investors will open opportunities for young people as well as old ones to be employed in building the middle level man power, which will make the economy of any country sustainable. Please make sure that you employ Sierra Leoneans and pay them well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to round up by sounding a word of caution. I have noted that you only operate in The Gambia. The topography in Sierra Leone is

different from The Gambia. Like the engineer rightly said, the Honourable Abdul Kargbo, for engineering purposes, today you do not have many customers and everybody is saying you are the best, but when you start operation, you may be constrained to provide the services we are praising you now for. The topography is different and the question I may want to ask is that why you failed to invest in other countries? I want you to also note that Sierra Leone is a difficult place. We have hills, valleys, bolilands, etc. but like the Honourable from Masungbala said, we want connectivity in every part of this country. We welcome Qcell Company to this country. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I want to make an observation. I want to know if by December, 2017 Mr Mohamed Bangura was still the Minister of Information. Just for the records. I want to know and for my edification because somebody is saying that by December, 2017 he was adviser to the President and Mr Alpha Khan was the Minister of Information and Communications.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, he did not say that.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Osman A. Kargbo said that.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, he did not say that. I listened to him.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I think this was why my colleague over there said that Honourable Mohamed Bangura should be recognised by you because he was the architect of this Agreement.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. I refused to recognise him, but I acknowledged the fact that he participated. Maybe it was during his ministerial tenure that this memorandum was negotiated.

**HON. P.C. MATILDA YAYU LANSANA-MINAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am sorry to say Pujehun District is suffering. I would like Qcell to operate in that District because my own Chieftom and other Chieftoms do not have any reception from

Orange and Africell. So, we are really suffering. If I go to my village, I will not be able to make phone calls till I come to Pujehun and other villages are equally suffering. I want to ask Qcell to go and establish Pujehun Districts. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Paramount Chief. I think she has spoken for most of you and I will now wind up this debate, so that we can proceed to the next issue on the Order Paper.

**HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a very important moment in the life of ICT in Sierra Leone. This is because like the Minister said, broad band penetration is very vital to our development. Qcell is one more step in improving our broad band penetration in Sierra Leone, which is very important. However, we can only caution that this is not the first time a new company is gravitating into Sierra Leone. We have had other companies like Smart, Green Net, etc., that came and went away. The important thing is that some of these companies went through difficulties, which must be stated quite clearly for the new companies. Mr Speaker interconnection is a system wherein you call other systems and you pay more. I hope, as time goes by, Members of the Committee and the Minister will begin to see how we can address the issue of interconnection to make it easier for the new comers to be able to participate more effectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is also important is that Qcell is coming to also bridge the issue of interconnection. Interconnection is very important and it has to be part of the process because they must work as a team. Like I said earlier, we must improve our telecommunication system and we should not forget that colocation is also very important component which should not be ignored. In other countries, before you sign an agreement to operate, you will sign an agreement to collocate. It is very important. I was part of a study that looked at this issue and we discovered that some of the bigger guys will not allow these younger guys to collocate. Therefore, they are at a disadvantaged position. So, Qcell should consider talking to people quietly and respectfully. They should also talk to the operators of this country to see colocation as a very important component in their investment structure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, but this is not just the mobile companies or Qcell. The Minister will agree with me that if we must attain universal access in this country or somebody in Pujehun talks to Kabala frequently without difficulties or those in Shenge talk to those in Magburaka without difficulty, the universal access system in the country must be improved. This is where we will plead with the Minister to make sure that the universal access continues to expand because it is important and we must expand it. I think the Ministry has attempted to divide the universal access, GSM operators because in the end, the GSM operators can only say we cannot wire the whole country. Therefore, the government must also contribute and by way of contribution, this is why you have the universal access system, which government must make part of its policy. I am certain that it is part of our policy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have made the point that this is a new company coming into this country. We are not going to overpraise a company which has not been effectively put to the test yet, but we can only state that we have our rules and regulations. This is because the function of the regulatory authority must also be taken into consideration. I see you attempting to advise these investors about the level of efficiency which they must demonstrate, but we must also inform the regulatory authority to perform their duties more effectively. They have the authority in their Act and government can take certain decisions to discipline the operators if they default. The drop calls is one area where people have been complaining about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody already said that the two parties do not want to ignore these smaller parties, but they are also important. I have come to realise the importance of continuity in governance. This was a concept or a project conceived by a Minister of the past Government and a new Minister in the 'New Direction Government' has taken it from the ground and is trying to achieve results. We are very certain that Qcell will perform well; and without me attempting to look at the functions already played by those operating in this country, I want to state here that they have also done their bit. These are people who came here on two generations and they are now operating on fourth generation and not many countries are operating on fourth

generation. The two companies we have here may have difficulties, but they have done their best by gravitating to the fourth generation. As we welcome this new company and again a Sierra Leonean at the helm of affairs, we want to be very certain that all of them work together in unison for the benefit of Sierra Leone. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. MATTEW S. NYUMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Minister of Information and Communications, you have heard from various speakers in the House. I will say thanks to my deputy during his term as Minister was able to identify an open market and allowed competition to take place. For me, that is how it should be. When you are operating, you have to open up the market for the business and we are here looking at a very good Minister. From all indication of what he is doing, he has decided to toe the line, which means that government is continuity. We are aware that government is continuity, but not in the bad way of doing things. We are ready to implement projects that are good.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo who is Member of that Committee. He has a lot of experience in the information and communications industry. He has also explained to us some of the issues we have raised concerning drop calls. At the Committee level, we discussed these challenges and we have planned, together with the Ministry, to embark on serious oversight. We believe NATCOM is the regulatory body which is charged with the responsibility to ensure that these companies carry out their functions in line with consumer protection. Mr Speaker, Consumer Protection is very clear in the Act and we are going to look at that area in our oversight. This is because for far too long consumers have not been compensated and there are lots of drop calls, but the operators are still charging people. They do not want to know how many minutes you have lost, but only interested in making profit. We believe with your good office, the issues that have been raised by the various speakers will be looked into.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member spoke about mobile sites, which is also important. He is a professional in that field. He further stated that if you

want to create sites, you have to go to areas where you have population. He was very correct in that regard. Somebody also spoke about Pujehun and I would like to encourage Qcell to look at those areas that have not been active in terms of mobile operators. The network of the existing mobile companies is very poor. You have to create sites in those areas. He actually sighted Smart Mobile Company because Company had all their operations in Freetown. Some professionals knew it and they told us that Smart is going to be out of business because they did not have enough sites to operate like Africell. In fact, Africell bought Tigo so that they would have enough sites to operate. That is why Africell and Orange are making huge impacts in the market. Orange is still in operation because they need people and they have sites.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speaker did say Parliament can ratify and review or 'de-ratify.' I want to take you on those words because we have the power of reviewing or 'de-ratifying' this Agreement if they fail to adhere to the provisions in this Memorandum of Understanding. This is very important to us. Mr Speaker, before I wrap up, I would like to read the first page, the fifth line. It says: **"...as Government of Sierra Leone also seeks to promote private sector investment that will provide the much needed employment opportunities for the growing youth population, especially in ICT technologies and application. As Government seeks to enhance domestic revenue generation through automation of revenue generation system especially with landing of the fibre optic cable; improved quality network service and penetration will help achieve these objective."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the reason for creating competition is to also provide employment for our youth. This is because we are now faced with immense employment problem and we do not have enough private sectors to help in addressing some of the employment issues in the country. We believe in open market operations and the Minister also believes in that. This is why he brought this document to this House for ratification. If this is ratified, they have the obligation to employ our young people. This Agreement is very clear, but I would like to draw your attention to Article

6. It is talking about employment and training. Mr Minister, I want you to take note of that very seriously. It is not good for us to ratify documents because we want to do so. Sometimes we have to look at the necessity and the gains for our people we are representing here. I want the Minister to take note of this particular provision in the Agreement. Qcell is working to make profit, but we must protect the interest of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I read Article 6[ii]. It says: 'The Company's employment policy shall conform to the existing laws of Sierra Leone. We are not expecting the Company to hire non-Sierra Leoneans for unskilled jobs. We have had experiences with Africa Minerals which led to the collapse of that Company. They were employing people from South Africa to come and repair Air-Conditioners. They preferred to employ foreigners and paid them handsomely. They usually call them expatriates, but these are foreigners. Therefore, I want the Minister to please take note of this. There are many unskilled labourers in this country and it will be absurd to bring unskilled workers who are foreigners when we have them here. We will closely monitor this particular clause in the Agreement and if they flout it, they will hear from us. We are in the 'New Direction' administration and you are expected to do things that befit the 'New Direction.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of training is very important and Sierra Leoneans must be capacitated, so that they can take over when the investors would have gone. This is why we transfer knowledge from one person to the other. We are not ICT experts, but we believe our brothers and sisters who are in this sector should be trained. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Paragraph 6[2]. It says: **"For the purpose of 6[1] above, in addition to providing on-the-job training, vocational training and other measures necessary and reasonable to achieve its employment objective, the Company shall use reasonable efforts and resources to provide training for each Sierra Leonean employees with a view to qualifying them to the positions described in 6[12] and 6[13] above, and as required by the Company's operations under this Agreement.**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the generality of this Agreement. Members of Parliament have urged Qcell to expand their coverage in their constituencies. Parliamentarians want to develop their constituencies in terms of mobile communications, but we should also concern about our brothers and sisters who will be working for Qcell. Mr Minister, I am sure these companies are under your mandate and control. Please monitor the GSM operators. I am saying this because what makes you a successful Minister is when you effectively monitor the activities of these companies. Also, what makes you a successful Minister is when you robustly implement the laws we pass in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the problem we have in Sierra Leone is implementation and enforcement of our laws. This was why when we were approving the nominees, I mentioned Mr Musa Mewa's case. He cited the provisions in the Mines and Mineral Act and he also said implementation would be his watchword. I hope all of us have read the document. We are happy because we have opened up the mobile operators or market for mobile operators to come. We are trying to encourage competition in the mobile market.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should not forget the fact that parliamentary Committee will monitor the implementation of the provisions in this Agreement. Let us ensure that we work as a team to help our brothers and sisters. Let us look at Article 6 and the fifth line of the first page, so that we can protect our brothers and sisters. We are talking about the Local Content Policy and this is why this Agreement is very important. I also want to remind you that Parliament can ratify and 'de-ratify.' I know you will operate within the rules of this country. I do not have doubt that you will go by the rules and regulations of this particular Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the Minister that this is a very good Agreement and I believe you can perform the duty that will benefit the people of Sierra Leone. Qcell is going to be a very good service provider and that is why we are talking about customer protection. I want you to think about what is stated in the ECOWAS



Protocol. Once again this Agreement is a very good. Thank you all for your various contributions.

**THE SPEAKER:** I call on the Honourable Minister for his comments.

**MR MOHAMED RADO SWARAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much for this very enriching debate. It is been very insightful and I have had opinions across the aisles. It is also refreshing in the perspectives you have debated. I want to thank and appreciate the effort of my predecessor, who presided over the signing of this Agreement. It is indeed a very good Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, speaking to the mobile network operators in the last couple of months and when I accompanied them to see the President, they had lots of rekindled hopes in the renewed business environment in Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, before this time, many have had second thought about whether to continue or not. There were serious issues about regulating environment or general business operational environment. However, I am pleased to inform this Honourable House that many had renewed their confidence and trust in continuing to operate in this country courtesy of the 'New Direction' and friendly business policies. We have raised a myriad of concerns about quality of service and those are all legitimate concerns. I also use the GSM operators, including the President of this country. All of us literally lived with the same challenges of drop calls, interrupted calls and poor quality service.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are going to retool and re-equip NATCOM to ensure quality of service and indexes are measured in the best interest of Consumer Protection. Remember, there have been talks about rationalisation at NATCOM and the quality of personnel required going forward, so that we are able to deliver the much needed quality of service for our people. In Ghana, just a few weeks ago, they fined the Mobile Phone Network Operators a total of **\$35mln** for quality of service and related issues. So, most countries treat such issues very seriously and I am very reassured that the Committee on Information and Communications is very alive and awake to their responsibilities. We must work together to ensure that our people get value for money,

particularly in the context where the President has repeatedly said he had three cardinal objectives for the ICT sector:

1. improved access and broaden the frontiers of connectivity;
2. improved quality of service; and
3. reviewed prices downwards.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of my predecessors, Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo, made a very important point with regards to interconnect calls. Well, NATCOM takes something like **0.02 Cent** Sierra Leone currency and the Operators retain **5 cents**. At a recent Sector retreat I organised at Tokeh, we agreed with NATCOM that they would be knocking off their 2 cents and the Operators will reciprocate same. We believe that will help alleviate the issues around pricing and other related issues. We are on course that will be realised before very soon.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the existing network Operators went to pay a visit to His Excellency the President. The President told them that 'the ICT is a matter of life and death and it is like food. We all wake up in the morning, the first thing you look around for probably is your cell phone. If you have **Le5, 000**, the other thing you remember is to buy credit.' This is how integral it has become to our lives and that is how catalytic it can become to national development if we use it well. In that regard, we have restructured the Universal Access Development Fund, which Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo mentioned. We want to ensure that it serves its intended purpose.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are also putting in place other measures, a package of incentives to attract Mobile Network Operators to expand coverage to the rural and un-served communities. You would agree with me that the first instance of business people is to tick around where they can make profit. Many of the rural farming communities do not have heavy subscriber basis. Therefore, they would need to be incentivised to take their services to those communities. Therefore, the Mobile Network Operators, through Sector Forum or Telecoms Action Group, have developed a blueprint of incentives that we will present to Government. This will enable us hold their fingers on the fire to deliver more services for our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, various speakers spoke about employing our local people. This is something I am very passionate about. In fact, I have a career as an Organisational Development and Human Resource Public Relations person. I have worked literally for all the mining companies and many of these companies usually bring plumbers, mechanics and middle level manpower employees and call them experts. They bring them from abroad and pay them huge amount of money, usually in Dollars. So, I would ensure that we work together with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to ensure that the Wages and Industrial Relations Act of 1971 and other Local Content Promotion Legislations are adhered to very strictly. This is because that is the only way we can create opportunities for our people. We would also ensure that the necessary technology, skills and expertise are transferred, so that our people can be competitive. We want to create a competitive mobile network environment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, many have spoken about their villages not having coverage. As Minister of Information and Communications, when I go to my village, I go to my Primary School field where you may be lucky to get a drop of connectivity or you climb a tree. I do not want to see a situation where a Member of Parliament would drop from a tree in trying to make phone calls. Therefore, I implore the mobile phone companies to work assiduously in addressing that problem. As Minister of Information my village does not also have connectivity. My biggest constituency here is Sierra Leone and we have committed to serve our country to the very best of our ability. I will always remain to serve Sierra Leone. Those who know me can attest to the fact that I will continue to serve Sierra Leone. What we are talking about today is about **\$181mln** investment. The first phase will invest about **\$60mln** and the remaining phases will be **\$121mln**. If this is properly protected, I am sure the entire country will have major multiplier effects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, serious concerns have also been raised about health and safety of our brothers. The Honourable Member on this side spoke about riggers climbing high towers more often, but without the necessary safety gadgets or safety harnesses to ensure that their safeties are guaranteed and ensured. Again, the Ministry

of Labour and the Committee will work together to ensure that some of those issues are addressed. However, it is very important for us to look after the welfare of Sierra Leoneans. We have said companies have come and gone, but I would not do a public relations or marketing speech for Qcell, all I can say here as Minister of Information and Communications is that working with a retooled and restructured NATCOM, we will ensure that we are able to deliver to the best of our ability to ensure that the three core objectives in the 'New Direction' Manifesto, as already mentioned above, are achieved

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I lost sleep over these things because they are at the heart and centre of the 'New Direction' manifesto. The President believes in a well-connected ICT country, which is a catalyst for national development. Many countries today are talking about e-health and we have launched an ambitious 'Free Quality Education' programme that is gaining attraction across the country and we believe in serious broad band connectivity that can be enhanced in a lot more ways than just one.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Memorandum of Understanding, which was laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 2018:

Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Qcell SL Limited, Dated Friday, December, 2017

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Minister. Indeed, it has been a very good and enriching debate.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

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

[B] PARLIAMENTARY SUMMONS

The Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board. That pursuant to Section 95 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, you are requested to appear before Parliament and answer to allegations levied against you by the Chairperson of the Committee on Trade on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.

**THE SPEAKER:** I would like to call on the Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board to take the podium. Dr Vibbi, I guess you are the Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board. You stand before the Bar of this House on a charge of contempt of Parliament pursuant to Section 95 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991. I will take the opportunity to read to you a provision in Section 95. It reads: **“Any act or omission which obstructs or impedes Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or Officer thereof in the discharge of his duties or affronts the dignity of Parliament, or which tends either directly or indirectly to produce such a result, shall be a contempt of Parliament.”** An issue, which this House has considered to be tantamount to contempt, arises from a complaint we have received from Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay, who is the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Trade and Industry. Are you aware of an incident that transpired between you and the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Trade and Industry on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.?

**DR VIBBI [*Executive Chairman, Produce Monitoring Board*]:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** We want to hear from you.

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very happy that I am before you to clarify an allegation that has been mentioned against my name and my person that I have said categorically that Members of Parliament are not important; and that I only listen to the commands that comes from the President and the Chief Minister. To me, I think that is impossible. I have respect for this House and that is why I have attempted on two occasions to be a Member of Parliament, but without success. However, to my level of education, I know this House is a third arm of Government and it is this House that make laws for this country. Apart from that, it was this Honourable House that approved my nomination. Therefore, I would not say this House has no relevance to my job. I have not said so and I will never say such a statement. I know we have got first impressions and those impressions are just what we are working on now, but I did not say so at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that I have the character, exposure and understanding that Members of Parliament are very important in the development and in the day-to-day activities of this country. So, it will not come from my side. I have come to clarify what exactly happened on the 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 when Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay went to my office.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold it right there, Dr Vibbi. I will now invite the Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay to inform this House precisely what transpired between herself and your good self on that fateful day for the benefit of all Honourable Members.

**HON. VERONICA K. SESAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 93, Sub-sections 1 to 3 gives Members of Parliament the mandate to oversee, represent and make laws. As the Chairperson of Committee on Trade and Industry, I made to understand that Dr Vibbi, the Executive Chairman of Produce Monitoring Board had an issue with the Minister and his staff concerning a lady whom he suspended and sacked. He was told that the Board has not yet been formed and that the lady in question should be reinstated. Mr Speaker, Dr Vibbi refused and when the lady was asked to go to the office by the Minister, she said there was police presence and she was not allowed to enter. Mr Speaker, since I am the Chairperson of the Committee that oversees that Board, I was informed by the Ministry. I tried to call Dr Vibbi as younger brother. I engaged him on that issue, but he refused to listen. He said he has suspended the lady and that was final. Mr Speaker before I formally wrote, I met the Clerk and the Speaker to intervene. Mr Speaker asked us to invite him and we did. He did come to Parliament but it was in my absence. He met the Speaker and the Ministry officials. He was again asked to go and reinstate the lady, but he refused. When I came back, I went to the Speaker and asked him about the status of this particular issue. He told me that he had already asked Dr Vibbi to go and reinstate the lady because the Board had not been reconstituted. Dr Vibbi refused and that the lady was to continue her suspension till the 24<sup>th</sup>. I have to wait because I am the Chairperson and I did not want fracas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wanted to help strengthen their relationship since that institution is under my supervision. I told the lady to wait. The last time she told me about police presence. We coincidentally met along the steps and I approached him politely. I called him and we went to his office politely. I think somebody was there as a witness. I said I did not want any other third-party let us just settle this thing because I am here to listen. I said I did not want what happened at Maritime to reverberate here. I said since I am the Chairperson, that was why I came to ensure good working relationship. In fact, Dr Vibbi was so furious and even said that the suspension would be extended to 30<sup>th</sup> instead of the 24<sup>th</sup>. He ordered me to leave his office and that was not my mandate, but the responsibility of Mr Minister. I said go and read Section 93[3] that gave me the mandate and that is why I am here. I told him I was there in two capacities:

1. as Chairperson of the Committee that oversees that Board; and
2. as President of the parliamentary Female Caucus *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Vibbi said: "**I am not answerable to Honourable Members; I am answerable to the Chief Minister and Mr President.**" I said you call yourself a Doctor and you ought to know better. If you are telling me that you are only answerable to the Chief Minister and President, I said that is good. I said you have also extended the suspension to the 30<sup>th</sup> instead of the 24<sup>th</sup>. I told the lady to Obey and complain. In other words, I told her to wait till the 30<sup>th</sup>. Dr Vibbi even expressed doubt about the 30<sup>th</sup>, stating that there are other issues. I am not against any punishment he might have imposed on her, whether for fraud or embezzlement, was not my issue. My issue was the process to suspend her. I said he should not take decision single-handedly without the Board. Mr Speaker, the lady went to me on the 30<sup>th</sup> and unfortunately, she was given a letter from Anti-corruption.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the most disheartening thing was when I received a letter written to the Leadership of this House, where myself, the Chief Minister and the Secretary to the President were copied. Without your permission, I want to read the last paragraph. It says: "**Giving the unpleasant situation, I therefore kindly ask**

**that Honourable Veronica Sesay is called to order and admonished that she Honourably exercise her authority as head of the Committee on Trade and Industry using the right procedures and processes.”**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure Section 93[3] gives me the right to visit and probe into any Ministry as Honourable Member. In other words, besides being the Chairperson of the Committee on Trade and Industry to supervise that institution, I have all rights to go and make sure I settle disputes. I think that is one of my functions, Mr Speaker. In terms of age, I think I am older than him *[Applause]*. He wrote this type of letter and copied the Chief Minister, failing to realise that there are three arms of government; Executive, Legislative and Judiciary. This is purely a legislative matter and he should have copied only us in Parliament. This was the issue and it was the reason I came and present it to the House under S.O. 23. He asked the Speaker to call me to order. This statement could be interpreted to mean that I am not fit to be a parliamentarian. I rest my case, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Order! Dr Vibbi, you have heard Honourable Veronica K. Sesay’s statement.

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you understand it?

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker

**THE SPEAKER:** What do you understand?

**DR VIBBI:** She mentioned a number of things I need to clarify.

**THE SPEAKER:** What do you understand from what she has just said in this House?

**DR VIBBI:** She had made a lot of complaints against my person.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, she alleged and let me summarise. The first issue is that your conduct obstructed or impeded the execution of her duties as a Member of Parliament, particularly as your Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Trade and Industry. The second thing is that by your conduct, you are guilty of an affront to the



dignity of Parliament [*Applause*]. And that you single-handedly, without the authority of your Board, decided to suspend an official of the Produce Marketing Board. As Chairperson of the Committee overseeing that institution, she tried to persuade you to reinstate her and then complain later, but you refused. I hope you understand those three points. Do you understand those three key elements?

**DR VIBBI:** No, that is what I am saying, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Tell me what you did not understand.

**DR VIBBI:** I think I owe the right to be given the chance to express my own side of the story.

**THE SPEAKER:** You will be given the right to respond because it is your right to defend yourself against the charges made against you, but I asked if you understood the charges made against you. Do you understand the gravity of those charges made against you?

**DR VIBBI:** No, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** You do not?

**DR VIBBI:** No, Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, tell me what you did not understand.

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, you have given three scenarios of charges levied against me. My understanding will only be guaranteed if I am given the chance to explain what happened between the Honourable Member and I.

**THE SPEAKER:** Dr Vibbi!

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** You are before the House on three counts charges; first, you obstructed or impeded the Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay in the discharge of the responsibilities entrusted to her by Parliament; second, that by that conduct, you are guilty of an affront to the dignity of Parliament; and third, that you single-handedly,

without the authority of the Board of that institution, decided to suspend a Senior Member of the Produce Monitoring Board.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do you understand those three things?

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** And the House is saying those three issues constitute contempt of Parliament *[Applause]*.

*[Suspension of S.O 5[2] being 3:00 p.m.]*

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to make it easy for you, Dr Vibbi. Did you understand those three charges?

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker. I understand those charges.

**THE SPEAKER:** And what do you say in reply?

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, I would have to go back to the context.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Mr Leader.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the letter was addressed to the Leader of Government Business and therefore I want to step in. He is serving the Executive Arm of Government, but what he did was in violation of Section 93 as cited by the Honourable Member. However, I believe we are humans and Dr Vibbi does not even understand the crimes he has committed. I am saying he is human and because humans are liable to mistakes, by stating in his letter that the Honourable Member should be called to order, that is an affront to Parliament as cited in the provision *[Applause]*. As part of the Leadership of this House, I was copied I engaged Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay on this issue. I read the letter over and over and I made to understand that he was even reminding the Honourable Member about her responsibilities as she do not know what she was doing. She has the right to go to your office, as inscribed in Section 93.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, ignorance of the law is no excuse. He thought he was doing the right thing. Honourable Veronica K. Sesay is the Mother of the House.

This House approved his nomination and I want to apologise on behalf of Government because he was nominated by His Excellency the President of the Republic, but he has embarrassed this House. This is a different Arm of Government and we expect him to know that. He is an educated man and we expect him to respect the legislature. President nominated him and this Parliament approved his nomination. You had the blessing of this House. I want to apologise to this Honourable House, with the leave of Mr Speaker. I have already apologised to the Honourable Member on behalf of Government in camera. I have apologised to her in camera and I have done that in the open. I also want to apologise to the Speaker of Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am sorry I have to stop you. Please take your seat. I understand perfectly the sentiments behind the representation being made by the Deputy Leader of Government Business, but let him know that it is not the Executive Arm of Government that is being arraigned before this House, but Dr Vibbi and he is here to answer for his conduct.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** I know, Mr Speaker, but I said in his capacity as Executive Secretary of Produce Marketing Board. However, he was nominated by the Executive Arm.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. You said you were apologising to Honourable Veronica K. Sesay on behalf of Government.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I would have expected that apology to come from another person  
*[Applause]*.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I am coming to that sir. He wrote to us and I want to make the last point. I do not need to tell Dr Vibbi to do the Honourable thing. He knows what to do and I have just stated what he did when she visited her office. You know what to do, Dr Vibbi.

**THE SPEAKER:** Order!

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Please, you need to take the honourable steps. We however demand an apology from you. Secondly, your letter to this House is an affront to Parliament. It is not a letter of complaint. I expect you to do the honourable thing. The Speaker ordered you to reinstate the lady you suspended irrespective of any other thing before the investigation, but you refused to do so. These are some of the crimes you have committed. You went ahead and sacked the lady without reference to the Board. So, I want you to do the right thing. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**DR VIBBI:** Thank you Honourable Leader of Government Business. Mr Speaker, I think in the discharge of our duties and as human beings... - *[Interruption]*.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, he asked him a specific question.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Let the Honourable Member have a say.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, I just want to hear what he has to say. His response will either lengthen or shorten the proceeding.

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, in the discharge of our duties, it is very possible sometimes as a human being to make mistakes. Maybe those are some of what I have done. In the first place I want to say I am sorry to the Honourable Member and also I am withdrawing my letter of complaint if it has hurts the Honourable Member.

**THE SPEAKER:** I cannot accept the phrase 'if it has hurts.'

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, I said I withdrawn my letter.

**THE SPEAKER:** You have to do that unreservedly.

**DR VIBBI:** I withdraw my letter of complaint as it has hurt the Honourable Member.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, I want to hear clearly what you are withdrawing and the language to use.

**DR VIBBI:** I withdraw the letter of complaint against the Honourable Member that was sent on the 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2018. I am sorry for any statement in that letter that was

conceived wrongly and has created the problem. I also want to make it clear for the records that I respect the Honourable Members and I know the importance of this House. I will never make statements that will not befit the status of parliamentarians. I will never do that I really want to make that very clear for the records.

**THE SPEAKER:** I recognise the Honourable Hassan.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when this issue came to the Well of Parliament, you were not here, but one thing I am very clear about is that you were aware of what transpired between the Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay and Dr Vibbi in his Office. I moved the Motion to summon Dr Vibbi to this House. The Deputy Leader of Government Business was explaining how he wanted to rescue Dr Vibbi, he had to acknowledge the fact that he was at fault. He refused and even wanted to apologise on condition. Well, what we are doing today is to send a message to the public that if you touch any Honourable Member, you have touched all. That is the kind of message we want to bring to people of this country. We want to send a message to the Executive Arm and other people that Parliament is an Arm of Government and nobody should take Parliament for granted. Parliament is not interfering into the work of any institution and that could be an uneducated statement to make by any member of the Executive [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Vibbi was nominated by the President and he was here for parliamentary approval. If Parliament had refused to approve you, you would not have occupied that position and the President could not have solitarily appointed you. I want Dr Vibbi to understand that he is on that chair because he was nominated by President and approved by this House. If that is the case, Dr Vibbi should not have made any statement against a senior Member of Parliament. Mr Speaker, in as much as we agreed that he had done wrong, I would like Dr Vibbi to unreservedly apologise to our senior colleague Honourable Member and the rest of Members of Parliament. That must be done in writing for future reference.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are aware of the fact that human beings make mistakes, but what we are saying here is that deliberate mistakes are not acceptable.

Therefore, Dr Vibbi should apologise as a sign of remorse. He should also reinstate the lady in question *[Applause]*. Those affected who were sacked must be reinstated. This is the message from Parliament. If Dr Vibbi fails to do this, then I will move a Motion for the Special Select Committee to reconvene, so that they look into this matter. I thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is said that if you want to know how beautiful your wife is until when she is old, you must look at the face of your mother-in-law. What we are envisaging today has the tendency to reoccur if Parliament is not firm in its decision. Sometimes we castigate our Government, but the reality is that the Government should not be castigated, if the other Arms of government are effective in the execution of their functions. When people take the law into their hands and do what they want to do and Parliament is quiet about it, do not blame Government, but blame Parliament. Today, we are here because the mother of the House has been molested. She is not a Mother for a single political party, but for all political parties *[Applause]*. She was molested, ostracised and almost annihilated deliberately. Mr Speaker, when the Honourable Member was explaining her ordeal, her explanation alone precipitated some innuendos. Everybody in the House was stunned and surprised that there is a Sierra Leonean who has the zest to molest somebody we see as mother.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the mother of this House was molested yesterday, it will be the father of this House tomorrow. So, I want a stringent action to be taken against Dr Vibbi for his insolence. This is because in your absence, I told the Deputy Speaker who presided over the proceeding that this sacking spree and the abrogation of the law into the personal hand of people we approved in this House is becoming very alarming in this country. Without the composition of the Board at the Sierra Leone Airport Authority, over ten people have been dismissed. They submitted their letters to me and the letters did not state any valid reasons why they were dismissed. I am saying this because it is similar to what Dr Vibbi did.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order. We cannot allow you to go ahead.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** I want to make a point sir.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** No, Mr Speaker. We will not accept.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, I want it to be known that it is the business of Parliament.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, the House is considering an item on the Order Paper.

**THE SPEAKER:** I know, Honourable Member,

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, the lady in question was suspended without the approval of the Board. Therefore, I am emphasising the relevance of the Board in taking key decision, including this issue. This is why I made reference to an action that was taken without the approval of the Board. I am saying that we could not have taken this issue serious if Dr Vibbi had not appeared. He is even reluctant to apologise. I want to remind Dr Vibbi that it was this House that confirmed his nomination and Parliament can unmake him as well. I want to say even an SLPP Member of Parliament is molested, you will kill me for that because I believe the prestige of Members of Parliament has to be kept in high esteem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to apologise to our mother for the molestation she faced. I want to state here that this Parliament will undermine its supremacy and responsibility if Dr Vibbi goes unpunished. We should take action against him. The action we will take is going to serve as deterrent to others. He is not the only one that has done that. In other words, he is the first person who has been unfortunate to be arraigned before this House. We should send this warning to others, so that they will not wake up one morning and dismiss people without valid explanation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Vibbi's issue should serve as a lesson to every Sierra Leonean. We should not treat this with levity at all. If we failed to do the needful, another Member of Parliament will come again with a similar complaint and you will not take any action against that person because you have failed to set example. This is the right opportunity we have to set the records straight. I trust your leadership and you have proven beyond all reasonable doubt that you are over capacitated for this position. On several occasions we have said it that you do not take party issue into consideration and you use your discretion in the manner that pleases every Member of Parliament. With you, we are rest assured that we have a sober Parliament. I thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to draw Dr Vibbi's attention to Paragraph 3 of his letter. He referenced Section 93 [1-6]. I am sure Dr Vibbi could not have understood the content in Section 93. Section 93 gives Members of Parliament the right to establish Committees, so as to oversee the various MDAs; and Section 93[6] gives those parliamentary Committees the 'powers of the high court' to summon anybody and to produce evidence.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw your attention to Standing Order 42. This Section gives parliamentary Committee Chairpersons the right to take final decision. Mr Speaker, we are attempting to politicise a very serious issue *[Applause]*. This issue has been bothering this House since the inception of this Parliament. Section 97[a] of the 1991 Constitution talks about maintaining the dignity of Parliament, both within and outside the precincts of Parliament. Dr Vibbi is my constituent, but we must understand that Parliament is an independent Arm of Government *[Applause]*. We have a role to play and our role is clearly stated in the Constitution. If Dr Vibbi had done what he was asked to do, I think the problem would have been solved. In fact, Dr Vibbi came to this House with no sign of remorse. I think everybody in this House could have considered the mistake to be a genuine one. As the saying goes, 'to err is human, but to forgive is divine. However, Dr Vibbi's disposition is a clear manifestation that he is not remorseful.



Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind all and sundry that whatever we do today would positively or negatively affect the dignity, prestige and position of every Member of Parliament. I am not saying we should recommend that Dr Vibbi be sacked, but what I want to suggest that we set the records straight because if somebody who is not a parliamentarian had the temerity to even refer this House to the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, he could do worst than this. How can you teach the Pope the Bible? To me, this is a misnomer. We have to treat ourselves seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Vibbi should apologise to the Honourable Member and this House unreservedly. What Dr Vibbi said was not an apology. We demand an unconditional apology from him. I may not want to say I want to play the devil's advocate, but I want Dr Vibbi to think properly. Dr Vibbi used using diction to talk to us, thinking that we do not understand English. You are a PhD holder, but we can communicate well in English. We understand English better than some PhD holders. We have lawyers amongst us and the Speaker is an erudite lawyer as well. Therefore, I want to ask Dr Vibbi to apologise. This is not a matter between SLPP and APC, but a matter between the dignity of Parliament and a member of an institution, not even the Executive Arm. A member of an institution challenged the dignity of Parliament. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his very constructive contribution. I want to summarise the mood of the House. I will address Dr Vibbi directly for you to properly purge yourself of this contempt of Parliament. I will ask you to do the following:

[1] You write a letter of apology; unconditional apology to Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay and you copy all the people that you copied in your letter;

[2] You withdraw the letter you wrote to the leadership of this House;

[3] You reinstate all those officers you have suspended from duty, pending the proper establishment of the Board of Produce Monitoring Board. Until then you are not allowed to leave the precinct of this Parliament. We will hand you over to the custody of the

Local Unit Commander [LUC] attached to Parliament, until our next adjourned date which is tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. I want to warn that if you fail to do any of those things, we reserve the right to bring to the attention of the President another thing that I will rather reserve for now. Let it be understood by you and others that nothing is immune from the scrutiny of this Parliament. Parliament has the right to scrutinise every activity of Government as by law established and nothing can escape scrutiny of this Parliament. This is so fundamental to the role of this Parliament. Let me ask you are you prepared to do what I have just mentioned to you?

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes or No?

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, I am prepared to do it sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** You will do that in writing. I call on the Sargent-at-Arms to hand you over to the LUC until tomorrow morning 10:00 a.m.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I want to observe. I was the seconder of this Motion, but I want to observe Sir. Mr Speaker, Dr Vibbi just said he is ready to adhere to those orders. If we hand him over to the LUC till tomorrow, he may not be able to write the letter.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you are free to provide him with pen and paper. Honourable Members, in light of several representations I have received from both sides of the aisles, I will allow you your freedom to go home, but you are hereby ordered to come to this House at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow with the letters you have agreed to write *[Applause]*. Dr Vibbi, I hope you understand that instruction.

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Are you prepared to comply with it or not?

**DR VIBBI:** Mr Speaker, I will comply, but with the exception of not withdrawing my letter of suspension or the dismissal of those people. I am ready to sacrifice my job and to face any penalty from Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I want quiet. Dr Vibbi!

**DR VIBBI:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** This House will pretend not to have heard what you have just said. We will give you the opportunity to have a rethink between now and when we resume tomorrow at 10.00 a.m.

**DR VIBBI:** Thank you Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** And we shall then see, whether you will comply or not? And this House definitely decide on certain measures depending on what you produce and tender to us tomorrow *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, any S.O. 23?

**HON. MOHAMED KASIM-CAREW:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O. 25. I moved a Motion on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2019 to temporarily suspend auction at the Queen Elizabeth II Quay until this Parliament and Assets Commission would made proper documentation in that regard. As we speak, we are not able to account for every containers since there is over 296 containers, which includes medical stuffs that we have to exclude from the present auction list and vehicles which are over 232. We are asking for two weeks extension, so that we can complete our assets verification and get back to this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** An extension of two weeks has been requested any seconder?

**HON. LAHAI MARAH:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

**THE SPEAKER:** And in the main time, nothing whatsoever should be done by any other authority except to execute what has been requested *[Applause]*

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O. 23. I want to say something about those who are still impersonating Members of Parliament and other Government functionaries. I have shared this information with some staff of Parliament that I have misplaced my

Parliamentary Identity Card. If found, please send it to me because others may use it to impersonate personalities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to something that has to do with health. Couple of months ago, we have been seeing on social media issues relating to health, especially those ranging from the ages of 1-12 years. One of the humanitarian organisations in this country has been championing that course through the programme manager called Mr Alfred Charles of CARITAS. With the leave of the Speaker, I want to implore this House to please give Mr Alfred Charles the chance to explain to us. This is because they have been soliciting financial support to take these children out of this country for advance medical attention. It has been over whelming for them as well as the organisation. As we speak, they have four cases and they need urgent medical attention. This means they need financial support. I want to ask this Honourable House to give two minutes to the Programme Manager of CARITAS to say something. He is going to tell us what they have been doing and how we could come in to render our assistance.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think this is a humanitarian activity and we should give Mr Alfred Charles the opportunity to explain to us. However, I want to remind him that if he has to come to this House again, this House has a dress code. I will however overlook this for today.

**MR ISHMEAL ALFRED [*CARITAS Programme Manager*]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to apologise for not having the correct dress code because I was in the field. I want to take this opportunity to thank Members of Parliament, whom I may not be able to call individually, for supporting us during the previous campaign. That campaign enables us to send two babies, Marian and Mariama to Indian. Thankfully, Mariama is back, but Marian's surgery will hopefully take place next week.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I am here today in this House to first of all request that we look into the possibility of developing a stronger and more comprehensive health care system in our country. Too many sick children are coming up on a daily basis and its becoming over whelming. We have been able to help those we can, but

there are some that cannot reach us and that is making it very difficult for us to be able to save more lives. Sometimes people ask the question, why the Government is failing to provide funds for CARITAS, so that they can take care of these children. However, we already know that Government has a lot and we want to kindly ask that we use this House, since it is the House of Representatives of the people to use every opportunity to solve this problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the Honourable Mustapha Sellu has indicated, we have about five children we have not started soliciting funds for because Marian, whose surgery would hopefully take place next week still needs **\$5,500** before the surgery is carried out. This is very difficult because we sometimes go out on the streets. There was a particular day we raised **Le10mln** with the intervention of some Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament joined us on the street campaign. It is the highest amount we raised on that day, but it is not enough. When converted, it was a little over one thousand Dollars. The surgery requires **\$27,100**. We have already established an account known as 'Sick Babies Donation Account. We are asking this Honourable House to help us secure funds from other establishments or businesses, so that they will be able to make monthly donations, maybe **Le10, 000** per staff or a Members of Parliament or whoever is able to contribute. I am sure nothing is too small.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking this Honourable House to help us engage the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, which has been very helpful over the period. I am not so much of a friend in many circumstances because I bring many cases than they require. I want to use this opportunity to thank the Honourable Mustapha Sellu, Honourable Sirajin Rollings Kamara and this Honourable House for their assistance. We have an account with Zenith Bank and the account name is Sick Babies Donation Account. The Account numbers are 411073000 for the Leones and 407013062 for the United State of America Dollar. If you go to the bank, ask for Sick Babies Donation Account and they will give you the number. We are actually reaching out to other Banks, so that we can have accounts in other Banks.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think we have done something very exceptional by allowing you to address Parliament in this Well, but because of the supremacy of the humanitarian nature of your work, this is why we have given you that privilege. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 4:15 p.m. and was adjourned to Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.]*