



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION—FIRST MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2023**

*SESSION – 2023/2024*



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**VOLUME: I**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.

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

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

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

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**Tuesday, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

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

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, kindly take your respective seats. I would want to make an explanation and it is going for, especially the new Members of Parliament. I presume the old Members already know the rules. There is an unwritten code of seniority in Parliament, which means that the older you are in terms of your membership to Parliament the closer you are to the front row of the siting arrangement. So, I hope the new Members will understand the reasons why they are at the back. It is part of parliamentary practice we observe here. There is no alphabetical order of sitting, but the sitting is done at the discretion of Mr Speaker; and in this particular instance, I am informed and directed by the principle of seniority. So, the two timers will be occupying seats nearer to the front than the new Members. Therefore, I implore all of us to understand that. There is no discrimination or favouritism whatsoever in the allocation of seats. I hope that is understood. I hope the Honourable Paramount Chiefs are comfortable where they are seated.

**HON. PC BIO PRINCE LANSANA:** I am not comfortable here. I want to occupy the front row please

**THE SPEAKER:** I take note of your request and it would be attended to, but with no promise. Take the seat allotted to you presently as we look into the matter later. Honourable Paramount Chief, it would be helpful if you could come to my Chambers later to explain why you find it more comfortable to sit in front than the one you have been allocated. You may have very good reasons I may like to hear that in private if you don't mind. So, this is just a little matter of housekeeping once we get that done we would proceed with the day's proceedings. I am sure everyone is comfortable where you are. One of the impossible tasks I have is to allocate seats that would make everybody comfortable.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I am seeing a second timer siting at the back.

**THE SPEAKER:** In that case, alright, when we adjourn the House, please come to my Chambers and we will discuss these issues later. If we begin to juggle around now, it is going to take us some time before we start today's proceedings.

**HON. VERONICA K. SESAY:** The allocation is fine, but I am not comfortable with the chair because the two arms are not in good condition.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, somebody needs to fix it. Can the Whips kindly help particularly the new Members to take their seats and try as best as possible to be comfortable where they are? As I indicated, second timers have the privilege of sitting as close the front as possible. This is the standard rule.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** I agree with you, Mr Speaker. I am not questioning your ruling at all. I am saying there is still vacancy here\*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Would you please tell me who those seats have been allocated to? Honourable Members, I need the attention of every Honourable Member. The Standing Orders make one thing clear; it vests in Mr Speaker the authority or power to allocate seats in the House. I have not done that yet because even the diagram of the sitting has not been presented to me by the Director of the Legislative Services Department. I am waiting to see and approve it. So, for today's sitting and maybe subsequent sittings, I implore all of us to kindly take the seats you have been temporarily allocated until I take a decision on the sitting arrangement. We should not make the sitting arrangement an issue here. I want you to be content with where you are until we reach a final decision on the sitting arrangement. With that we will now proceed with the matters at hand for today.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, if those three Members are to be here, you have to talk to them that we need decorum.

**THE SPEAKER:** I know they are Siamese twins. They appear to be Siamese twins inseparable in some way, but this is Parliament and we would have to summon a surgeon to do the proper operation to separate them for the sake of decorum. I know what I endured during the Fifth Parliament.

Honourable Members, I have just been advised that due to technical problems the Votes and Proceedings are not yet available, but would be available later. So, until that time we shall skip item II for now. We are trying to go e-Parliament. When things work properly and there are no technical issues, you would be getting your Votes and Proceedings on the gadgets in front of you and also on your tablets. You will be supplied with tablets. So, we shall skip item II and move on to item III.

### **III ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER**

**THE SPEAKER:** I have a couple of announcements to make. My first announcement goes to all the appointees of His Excellency the President who are subject to approval by Parliament. They are urged, all of them if they have not already done, to expedite the submission of all the information required of them to the Clerk of Parliament without further delay in order to facilitate the work of the Appointments Committee. This is the first time in living memory that we are dealing with almost all the appointees of His Excellency at one and the same time. They used to come to us in batches, indeed they have come in batches this time, but before the commencement of Parliament. So, you can well imagine the pressure of work that this demands of the Appointments Committee. We will be approving the Appointments Committee before we rise today, so that hopefully starting tomorrow they will start interviewing the appointees and we will be approving them in batches as we receive the reports of the Appointments Committee. So, those of you with friends and relatives among the appointees should let them know that they have got to come to Parliament and do the needful as urgently as possible.

Honourable Members, this means and this brings me to the second announcement I have to make, which is the appointments of Members to the Standing and Sessional Committees of Parliament. This is in progress and hopefully we are going to approve a few Committees today that we have deliberated upon. Of course, there are over 30 parliamentary Committees to be constituted. This time around for certain Committees if not all, we have got to align our work with the five pillars that bear the priority of the Executive, starting with agriculture, infrastructure, etc. We are going to create

Committees which will align with the pillars announced by His Excellency the President, so that oversight work can be done efficiently and effectively. That will be in addition to the normal Standing and Sessional Committees to be constituted.

Honourable Members, let me state here that meritocracy is going to be the overarching principle and this is why you have been requested by the Office of the Clerk to present your curriculum vitae. We want to put people in Committees where they can be effective and they can also realise their potentials because you have the potential to do so. We need to fit your background with the relevant Committees, so that the work of Parliament can be effective. I am afraid there is one area we achieved a lot during the Fifth Parliament. I must however confess here that somehow things fell below par when it came to oversight. We could have done better in our oversight work. To the extent that towards the end of the life of the Fifth Parliament, we had an avalanche of reports that were laid on the Table and there was no time to debate them. We would be looking into some of them as much as possible, but there is no absolute guarantee that we would not get overwhelmed by new work that would come our way. So, much as we can celebrate our achievements during the course of the Fifth Parliament, we fell short of expectations in the area of oversight work. This is why I want to implore all of us to kindly do better. I am sure this Sixth Parliament has a capacity to do better in that area than we were able to achieve during the Fifth Parliament. So long as we set about doing our work with diligence, determination and a higher level of efficiency.

We will be announcing the membership of some of the committees for the approval of the House before we rise. The Committees include; the Selection Committee, the Supervisory Committee, the Business Committee, the Appointments and Public Service Committee and the Parliamentary Commission, those we shall take up today because of the urgency attached to their work. The other Standing Committees will be announced from time to time as and when they are ready.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O 34. We want to thank you and your administration for trying to take us to the most advanced standards of parliamentary procedures and practices in modern times. We are moving towards a



paperless Parliament and we what to appreciate you for that. Some of us who are in the international Parliaments, especially the ACP/EU Parliament are used to it now. However, the transition to paperless Parliament should be done with caution. For the purpose of effective service delivery, we have to ensure that hard copies are made available. If electronic copies are not available due to technical issues, let us have the hard copies. We do not want to have kneejerk pattern in trying to roll out the paperless Parliament, which is very good. We applaud you and your administration, but we have to be very careful. Therefore, I want to kindly appeal for a reconsideration of this issue. You would agree with me that we have many new Members and need induction. Even if the soft copies are available, they need to know how to operate the Tablets, but they are yet to be given to us. I know you will address that situation very soon. So, we are appealing through your good office to reconsider this issue. Maybe I was not paying attention, but we have to look at the Votes and Proceedings again because I do not see Members with copies of the Votes and Proceedings at the moment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of us do not have copies of Votes and Proceedings. So, we are concerned and I know that they need to know how to connect to the internet. We need the internet for us to access our documents. So, I want to crave your indulgence to take note of what has happened today and working towards correcting the situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also need to speed up the training for the Members of Parliament, so that they can be able to use the electronic gadgets that are in front of us. I cannot assume, but I am sure most of the MPs are not familiar with ICT and that is why we have to speedily train our Members of Parliament. They should be able to use these gadgets on their own. With all due respect to our Paramount Chiefs, but they are traditional people and we still want to maintain our tradition of Paramount Chieftaincy. Mr Speaker, it is our responsibility to train MPs on how to use these gadgets. I want to apologise for any inconveniences this has caused. Please exercise patience and reason with the Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** The points the Honourable Leader has made are very salient. We recognise that we are going through a transition phase from working with paper to a paperless Parliament. I also want to state here that transitions have their own glitches. We try and accommodate them as best as we can, but the drive towards e-Parliament is inevitable. We have to be determined to convert, modernise, innovate and bring ourselves in line with modernity for reasons that you have explained. This is because when you leave this Parliament and go to international parliaments, you would find that in most cases things are done electronically. We are still in the Middle Ages dealing with paper. So, the drive towards that is inexorable. We have to move in that direction, but we have to take a count of what you have said. I am sure little by little we shall get there. The transition cannot be too drastic; we have to also bear in mind the resources available to Parliament in effecting the transition.

Honourable Members, there was one more point I wanted to make in my announcement. It is going to take time for all of us to get to know each other and that onus lies with me more particularly because I need to recognise Honourable Members when they seek to take the Floor. So, for the time being from now on, particularly for the new Members, I would ask that when you rise to speak, please give us your name and the district you come from. This will facilitate recognition, both on my part and on the part of your colleagues. I think that is all for now.

#### **IV. ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY THE SPEAKER**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, Honourable Clerk of Parliament, by your collective votes last Thursday and in consonance with the provisions of Section 79 of the Constitution [Act No. 6 of 1991], you Members of Parliament made a momentous decision. You agreed to renew my mandate and repose your trust and confidence in me by electing me as Speaker of this Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic. For this singular honour you have bestowed on me to continue to serve my beloved country, Sierra Leone, I want to thank all of you, old and new Members alike, and I do so most profoundly.

2. Honourable Members, by my oath of office I have sworn, I have pledged faithfully and conscientiously to discharge my duties as Speaker of this Sixth Parliament and to do right to all manner of people in accordance with the sacred and supreme law of the Constitution of Sierra Leone and to uphold the laws and customs of Parliament without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. This is a most solemn undertaking to which I am now bound to perform at all times. As an ordinary mortal I can't do without invoking the intervention of Allah Almighty to guide and direct and protect me and to grant me the wisdom, strength and fortitude to live up to this solemn pledge and to deliver service again to this country to the satisfaction of all its citizenry.

3. Honourable Members, I do not know how many of you have a true understanding of the meaning and significance of the solemn oath of office that you all swore as Members of Parliament last Thursday. It is my fervent hope that all of you do, but in case there is anyone with a doubt about its import, let me take just a little time to explain and elucidate.

4. All of us in this Chamber seated as Members of Parliament owe one of the greatest responsibilities that anyone can undertake for this country. Together, we alone are the chosen people exclusively vested with the power to make laws for this country and more particularly to make laws for the peace, security, order and good governance of Sierra Leone. That power that has been given to us is inalienable and is given to us by the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991 which is the supreme law of the land, [the grundnorm as the Germans would call it]. I am sure you were each given a copy of this most important document together with a copy of the Standing Orders of Parliament. If this was not done when you took your oath on Thursday, be assured it would be done very shortly by the Clerk of Parliament. By the principle of separation of powers, Members of Parliament are now enjoined to stoutly defend and protect this power zealously.

5. Honourable Members, to underline just how onerous this power of Parliament is, it is enshrined in Section 73 of the Constitution. Precisely because it is so enshrined, it cannot be taken away from us. This is because when we exercise this power, we are

doing so on behalf of the entire citizenry who have voted us to Parliament mainly for that purpose as well as to make their voices heard on matters that touch and concern the interests of our country. The awesomeness of this power is further emphasised by Sub-section [8] of Section 108 of the Constitution, which makes it abundantly clear that any attempt by any Bill to take it away from Parliament or to alter it in any shape or form, can only be done if at least 2/3 of all the Members of Parliament approve and this approval goes for every stage of the legislative process. Equally, even after 2/3 of the Members of Parliament shall have approved, the Bill must also be subjected to a referendum of the people. This is because all these stringent essential preconditions, Section 73 is generally referred to as an entrenched provision of the Constitution. It is alongside many other provisions that belong to this unique class all of which are listed under Section 108 of the Constitution.

6. Honourable Members, that is not all. Even more prohibited is the penalty of treason that awaits anyone who attempts to suspend, alter or repeal either Section 73 or any other provision of the Constitution by means other than under the expressed authority of Parliament. As you all know, treason is a capital offence punishable by death until it was changed recently to life imprisonment by the Fifth Parliament. Whether the penalty is death or life imprisonment, it is a manifestation of the severity of the offence that matters.

7. Honourable Members, thus far I have highlighted the awesomeness of the power that the Constitution gives to Parliament and its Members. However, power is something that never stands alone; it is always in need of a companion and that companion is called responsibility. Therefore, it is appropriate that we also consider the important responsibilities borne by every Member of Parliament.

8. Honourable Members, like the powers given to Members of Parliament, their responsibilities are similarly enshrined in the Constitution; and for reference purpose, Section 97 will suffice as the most relevant. That Section enjoins every Member of Parliament to maintain, at all times, the dignity and image of Parliament in all their activities, both in and out of Parliament. In this regard, Members of Parliament are not

only representatives of the people, they are obligated to cease and desist from any conduct by which they seek improperly to enrich or alienate themselves from the people. I crave your indulgence and I need to repeat that particular part of my speech.

Like the powers given to the Members of Parliament, their responsibilities are similarly enshrined in the Constitution and for reference purpose, Section 97 will suffice as the most relevant. That Section and this is really where I need to underscore what I am saying, that Section enjoins every Member of Parliament to maintain, at all times, the dignity and image of Parliament in all their activities, both in and out of Parliament. In this regard, Members of Parliament are not only representatives of the people, they are obligated to cease and desist from any conduct by which they seek improperly to enrich or alienate themselves from the people.

9. Honourable Members, this heavy responsibility is really what the oath sworn by Members seeks to encapsulate. Again, it is important that we repeat its essential elements. First, Members have sworn that they will bear true faith and allegiance to the Republic of Sierra Leone as by law established; second, that they will uphold and defend the Constitution of Sierra Leone; and third, that they will faithfully and conscientiously discharge their duties as Members of Parliament. No responsibility can be higher or stronger than to uphold and defend the Constitution of our country. In other words, Parliament is the gatekeeper of the country's great principles, values and virtues, including upholding and defending the Constitution and its supremacy and also respecting and maintaining the supremacy of the Rule of Law. As such, no sooner a Member has taken the oath and taken his seat in this House, he is qualified to carry the high title of Honourable and he also becomes the alter ego of the House. To maintain that coveted title, the Member must always demonstrate that he can be relied upon to defend the Constitution of our country. This means he must not be an offender of the Constitution because to do so is to run the serious risk of expulsion from Parliament. In other words, a Member cannot put himself in a situation where he is perceived to reprobate and approbate at the same time. He must always stand above board and always stand on the right side of the law of the Constitution.

Accordingly, he must conduct himself as a role model for others to emulate and he must therefore not make himself a violator of the Constitution in any way. So, if there is any Member who thinks wittingly or unwittingly, he may have done anything that is in violation of the Constitution, he is best advised to consult with the Clerk of Parliament to establish whether there has been an infraction and how it could be remedied quietly and discreetly.

10. Honourable Members, this advice is not meant to frighten or intimidate you; rather it is apposite that Members should know right from wrong right from the beginning, and to make themselves fully compliant with the demands and dictates of the Constitution. However, if you fail to take action and you are discovered later to have fallen foul of the Constitution, it could have very serious and lasting consequences.

11. Honourable Members, let me now turn to the next important responsibility of Members of Parliament. We are responsible for translating into law the policy directives brought to us in this House by the Executive Arm of Government. For the Fifth Parliament, over the past five years, terminating on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023, we were able to score extraordinary achievements, notwithstanding the vicissitudes ordinarily associated with Hung parliaments in which no political party has a clear majority. Despite the Fifth Parliament being a Hung Parliament, in total, we held no fewer than 301 plenary sittings; passed 84 Bills into law and some as extraordinary in nature as they were ground-breaking; approved 64 Constitutional and Statutory Instruments; approved 208 Agreements of Loans and Grants; ratified 51 Treaties, Conventions and Protocols; and tabled 121 Reports by Committees and delegations. Altogether there were a total of 829 instruments. That was a record without precedent in the history of the Parliament of Sierra Leone.

12. Honourable Members, among the ground-breaking laws passed by the Fifth Parliament was the repeal of some draconian portions of the Public Order Act of 1965, to give more freedom to journalists to practise their profession the abolition of the death penalty; the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act popularly known as the [GEWE Act] and Section 58 of the Public Elections Act, of 2022. The combined

operation of these last two laws has enabled this nation to move towards the path of justice for women in this country and away from the status quo and the traditional stereotype. It should therefore surprise no one when global accolades begin to pour into the country for President Bio's decision to appoint up to 33 women into his Government. Within our ranks here in Parliament, women lawmakers today account for 30.4% of the elected seats, compared to 14.5% in the Fifth Parliament. What a quantum leap this is! We must pay homage to President Maada Bio who signed into law the GEWE Act just a few months ago, which sets a 30% quota of women in Parliament, the cabinet and other public institutions. For the first time in the history of Parliament, women won 41 seats out of the 135 from the General Election. When we add the one Woman Paramount Chief Member re-elected to the House out of the 14 Paramount Chiefs Members of Parliament, we still have 28.2% out of the total of 149 seats.

13. Honourable Members, great achievements like these do portend greater things ahead for this country. It also highlights clearly the tremendous work and achievements of the first term of President Julius Maada Bio. The question we must now face is whether this Sixth Parliament is capable of meeting the challenge left behind by the Fifth Parliament and, more importantly, of surpassing it? Only time will tell. Obviously it will require more hard work but it is certainly not impossible. It all depends on how prepared and determined we are in this Sixth Parliament to work hard and deliver the public goods that will continue to transform our country. I am confident that this Sixth Parliament will not only match, it will more than match the record of the Fifth Parliament.

14. Honourable Members, for this Sixth Parliament, all the evidence points to our priority agenda having already been crafted for us and it promises exciting times ahead. We shall be passing Bills and approving other legislative instruments specifically to give effect to the policies elaborated in the Five Game changers enunciated in the Manifesto of this Second Administration of the President. Of the utmost priority is the consolidation of the gains of his First Administration, and the acceleration of economic growth and the building resilience. They are: First, Feed Salone: An initiative to boost

agricultural productivity to ensure food security and inclusive economic growth. If Sierra Leone becomes self-sufficient in food it would save between US\$300 and US\$400 million a year in our import bill alone, to say nothing about the other significant benefits to the country. Second, Continue with Human Capital Development in order to nurture skills fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through the development of technical and vocational skills and grow the economy. Third, Youth Employment this is aimed at creating 500,000 new jobs over the next five years for the employment of our youth population which has been growing in exponential proportions. Fourth, Revamping the Public Service architecture to achieve service delivery, efficiency and professionalism by application of meritocracy, and not chronic cronyism or nepotism.

And Fifth, Technology and Infrastructure to create new pathways for sustained and sustainable economic growth by investing in infrastructure, technology and digitisation especially in energy generation and transmission, construction of roads and bridges to facilitate movement and linkages between production centres and markets.

15. Honourable Members, throughout my statement I have laid great emphasis on hard work. This is because, as your Speaker, I want all of us to embrace a new work ethic as the only viable option to attaining success. For me personally, that has been the secret of my entire life. Whatever I have done or achieved in life, hard work has been my inseparable companion. I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I come from a very humble background, from parents who were completely unlettered and from a town, Gbinti, that is especially famous for being perhaps the first to adopt the religion of Islam in the North. Thanks to the Roman Catholic Mission who built a school in Gbinti. I might never have completed my primary education. By sheer dint of hard work, I went through the Common Entrance Examination, as it was then called, with flying colours and won a Government scholarship that lasted with me throughout schooling. I am not and have never been a lucky person and that is why I do not gamble. Throughout my secondary schooling from St. Andrew's Secondary School in Bo to the Methodist Boys' High School at Kissy Mess Mess and to St. Edwards Secondary School at Kingtom in Freetown, I was always at the top of my class. At St. Edwards, I



completed my GCE A Level in one year and earned a scholarship to read law at the Australian National University and later got called to the Bar in 1970. I benefitted from a policy of the Australian Federal Government that recruited the best of the best into their service, where I spent one year as a Legal Officer in the Office of the Federal Attorney-General before proceeding to Cambridge University in the United Kingdom where I successfully read for my Master and doctorate degrees in Constitutional and International Law.

16. Honourable Members, from Cambridge, I joined the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and again by dint of hard work, I quickly rose to the rank of a Director at a very tender age. During my time there, I acted as Legal Adviser to the then Freedom Fighters of Zimbabwe, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, for their peace talks in Geneva as well as for their Constitutional Conference at Lancaster House in London. I did the same for Premier Price of Belize and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. My last assignment before leaving the Commonwealth Secretariat to return home to Sierra Leone in 1982 was as Secretary to the Commonwealth Observer Group for the Ugandan Elections of 1980.

17. Honourable Members, my sojourn as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS now renamed the President of the Commission is already well known in West Africa. Apart from being the brainchild of ECOMOG which liberated Liberia from the throes of its civil war in the 1990s, I left at least two enduring legacies which until today stand as a testament of my stewardship in ECOWAS. First, I raised the profile of ECOWAS to a level never before attained, both within the West African region and in the wider international community; and second, I pioneered the revision and modernisation of the original ECOWAS Treaty of 1975 which was succeeded and replaced by the Revised Treaty of ECOWAS of 1993. So impressed were the ECOWAS Heads of States with my stewardship that the then Nigerian Head of State, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, asked me to stay for another term of office. I gently declined because by 1993 when I looked at myself in the mirror, I could hardly recognise myself. From a sweet innocent looking youth of 40 years of age with jet black hair when I assumed

office as Executive Secretary in 1988, the rigours and pressures of office rapidly turned my hair silver and since then the blackness of my hair has never returned.

18. Honourable Members, I narrate all of this not out of arrogance or pomposity, but merely to demonstrate that I am a man with a humble pedigree who is driven solely by an ambition to deliver service to my people and to leave a legacy behind for others to emulate. I am not a lover of the glamour of high office nor am I mesmerised by it. When I serve in any office, high or low, my guiding principle had always been to give it my all, backed by superior intellect, experience, consistency and steadfastness, honesty and results.

19. Honourable Members, let me conclude with a personal confession. Throughout my professional working life, the only man I have admired and adored as a mentor is the late Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kwan Yew. I was privileged to meet with him and see him in conversation with his peers at Commonwealth summit meetings during my time at the Commonwealth Secretariat. He was a man who inherited from the British colonialists in the early 1960s, the same time that Sierra Leone gained her own independence, a vastly impoverished island of 214 square miles at low tide. At that time Singapore possessed literally nothing in terms of natural resources except its untrained and unskilled human capital consisting of mainly Chinese and Malays and other ethnic groups. In barely 40 years, Mr Lee was able to provide leadership for Singapore and to transform her from a Third World to a First World country. Compared with Singapore, Sierra Leone is richly endowed with all the natural resources you can imagine, including similarly unskilled human capital. So, with the right leadership, focus and determination, not just in the Executive Arm, but also in this Legislature, we too have the opportunity to transform our country into the new Singapore of West Africa and I believe it is still possible to achieve this in our own life time.

21. Honourable Members, to get there, we must be united, resolute and unrelenting in our march to transformation and prosperity. We must all try to understand and appreciate the fact that in the midst of all the global economic and health crises, we

owe a duty to our people to deliver. If Mr Lee could deliver for his people in Singapore in 40 years, I believe we too can.

22. Honourable Members, little things can count as well as big ones. From this Parliament, we can establish little values that others can follow. For example, we can start by cultivating a culture of respect for time. When our Standing Orders require us to start the work of Parliament at 10 a.m. prompt and to end at 3:00 p.m. or beyond, let us all agree to obey. Let this Sixth Parliament therefore agree to set an example for the rest of mankind in this country to follow, so that together we can establish a new work ethic for this nation.

23. Honourable Members, I thank you all once again for your kind attention and for re-electing me as the Speaker of this Sixth Parliament. May Allah bless us all and bless our country Sierra Leone. Can we get on with the next item?

## **V. FELICITATIONS TO THE SPEAKER AND DEPUTY SPEAKER**

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for acknowledging the fact that we voted for you. However, a lot of us are constrained as what to say because you have said all that we wanted to say. I want to thank you for that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one thing that happened to me in life that I have come to appreciate very much is that you are the Speaker today and you call me Honourable Member. We are in the same Well, discussing the same issues. When I was a student, we used to come here to listen to Dr Abass Chernor Bundu when he was making his contributions. Those were days when we brought our note books and pens to take note of what he was saying. Some of us admired him very much when we were students. We wished to be like him not because of his eloquence, but because of the issues you used to advance in Parliament. No wonder why Transparency in Arica rated Sierra Leone as the best Parliament in Africa. This is due to his experience he mustered over the years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the women of this country owe everything to you for the role you played in enacting GEWE Act which provides for 30% women's

representation. As the Presiding Officer, you made sure the GEWE Bill was passed into law. So, I hope the women of this country will appreciate you and give you the kudos you deserve. I would like the Speaker to add this to his CV. The only country in Africa that can be compared to Sierra Leone in terms of female representation is Rwanda. I want to thank you for that. I also want to extend thanks to the President for ensuring that the women are taken care of. The youths are also going to be taken care of.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was doing some research yesterday and I found out that Sierra Leone now has the youngest Member of Parliament in West Africa. I think that is a Kudus to the Government and to the people of this country. The Fifth Parliament was a rough rider because of its nature. It was a hung Parliament, but one thing I admired you for so much was that you were able to bring us together even in the midst of some of us being very difficult. Your leadership skills and your ability to bring people together helped us a lot and that is why we succeeded.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to state here that I will continue to serve you and this Parliament diligently. I thank God that we no longer have a hung Parliament. I want to thank you and all Honourable Members who fought very hard in their districts to give us this type of number. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think you would all agree apart from being the mama of the House she is the most senior.

**HON VERONICA K. SESAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for that accolade. A word to the wise is sufficient. Mr Speaker, before my intervention, I would like all the women to just rise and give a round of applause to our Speaker. [A standing ovation was given by the female Honourable Members]. I want to thank you so much for the standing ovation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Speaker was making his speech, I listened to him attentively. It goes without saying that you are a man of the people and you are a man that can perform. Our President is a 'talk and do' President. I think you are among the talk and do people. Thank you very much for that. If we can see today

many women in Parliament, we are talking about 28.9% as stated by Mr Speaker. I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President for the Political Will he demonstrated. This is because it takes the Political Will to do what he has done. I do not think we would have been here, but because of his Political Will, we are where we are today. I want to thank him on behalf of the women for showing that he is a real talk and do. I could remember vividly when we came from Rwanda and Kenya, we went to him with our resolutions and findings. He said: "If you want it, go for it." In turn, we told him that we were going for it and we went for it. Mr Speaker, and the Leaders of the various political parties and the Paramount Chiefs did very well in enacting the GEWE Bill. So, we must say thanks to everybody in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speaker gave me a word of courage and I want to tell the world about what he did for the GEWE Bill. It was very rough and tough, but we succeeded at the end. The women's organisations were pouncing on him for the GEWE Bill. The Minister of Gender did her own bit and we even spoke about affirmative action. We were so eager and anxious to see more women in Parliament. The Minister called and told me that, S.O[2] 'Oya, I will help you, but if you say you are going with this affirmative action, I pity you. I will find a way to help the women because we want to see more women in Parliament and other institutions.' I thanked him for that promised. Well, I used to say I am his Personal Assistant [PA]. I have been to his office severally to lobby. Again, the women's organisations were also going there and sometimes they sent in letters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been going on radios and televisions to sensitise the women and the general public on the importance of that Bill. The Speaker and the various Leaders in Parliament played their roles. If the Speaker says yes is yes and if he says no is no because he presides. We worked together in achieving this positive result. The Leader of Government Business did very well. It was however difficult to convince the others, but we continued to push harder. The Honourable Emerson S. Lamina, Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh and many others did very well. So, this is why we are here today. This is also the reason the President has appointed many

women to serve in different positions. It is in the Constitution for 30% female representation in all walks of life and we have started seeing it. I thank the Speaker very much for his fatherly love. He has shown an unflinching love for the women of this country. You have shown that you also have girls, women, sisters, aunties, mothers and of course a beautiful wife. I want to thank you for fighting for us because we were vulnerable. Maybe it would have been only two female MPs to come to Parliament. This is because when I came here during the proportional representation, we were 19 female MPs, but that number declined considerably. Today, we are talking about 28% during your regime; during my own regime; and during the regime of His Excellency the President. I know it would go a long way and we would continue to pray for you and to make sure you enjoy the fruit of your labour.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking about your achievements, I am sure your name is a household name within ECOWAS. You have made us proud and any time we go to ECOWAS, people will say where is now your now Speaker who was the Secretary General of ECOWAS? I will tell you that this man is a Booker Washington. He has done it and he is ready to do it again even when he is on the walking stick. So, you are still good to go. We thank you and the women are ready to work with you. We will make sure we work assiduously to ensure that you succeed in this Sixth Parliament. I am pleading that when the women take the Floor, please give them chance to talk, so that they too can be heard. We want to see more women in Parliament. I want to encourage the women to be bold. We do not want people to say the women are not saying anything. We want to prove them wrong that we the women are very eloquent and I have no iota of doubt seeing them. This is because Shakespeare once said: "There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face." I am however seeing the construction in their faces that they can do it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Speaker for his inspiration and I want to thank each and everyone here who fought and stood by us to pass that great Bill. I thank my Leaders and the Leaders yet to come. I want to say thanks to them and I know they will hear us because they too played their own bit. I also thank the staff who

were helping us, especially the Gender Desk Officers. They did their own bit. I want to say special thanks to everybody in this House, even the camera men for letting us achieve the 28.9% in this House.

With that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for everything and thank you for listening.

**HON. NENNEH LEBBIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I told you the last time that my sister seated adjacent to me has been a very good sister to me for a long time. Mr Speaker, when I listened to you this morning, I felt good, particularly when you recognised the effort we made as a Parliament to get you back to that seat. I thank you for appreciating us. The last time I came to this House I pleaded with you in relation to the GEWE Bill, but that has become a thing of the past with your effort. During the debate on the GEWE Bill, you almost became a Member of Parliament through your frequent interventions when trying to ensure that the right thing is done. I really appreciate you and to bring you greetings from the women of Bo District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the re-election of the Speaker is not a surprise to me because you have done well for us and this country. Mr Speaker, the way you meander in the last Parliament was great. You ensured that some Bills went through despite it was a hung Parliament. I admired your service and I appreciate you for what you have done. I hope this time round you would not get the kind of headache you got the last time. I am sure the last time you really had so much headache in this House. There are times when sometimes I pity your situation and sometimes I wondered what the Speaker would do with some of the difficult moments he encountered in this House. The grey hair on your head depict experience and they are not for nothing. He has demonstrated wisdom in the last Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Silver hair, Honourable Member.

**HON. NENNEH LEBBIE:** Thank you sir. Mr Speaker, your hard work and the services you rendered to this Nation convinced us to allow you to come and serve again. For the fact you accepted this offer, it shows signs of patriotism. There are people at your age

who would decline such offer. They will say they want to rest and take care of their grandchildren. You accepted to serve this nation and that is a great deal of work. I am sure with our support, you will succeed. This is because you succeeded during the most difficult Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you took us through on the work we did during the Fifth Parliament, that accolade has been given to you. We appreciate you so much and we want to believe with our support you will succeed. This Parliament is not going to be a difficult one this time. Thank you so much and on behalf of the women in Bo District, I wish you success in your office and I wish you all the best. I thank you very much.

**HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for that speech. I was greatly inspired. I want to use this opportunity to register my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President. I listened to your story and you spoke about hard work. You said you had never been a lucky person. I was also inspired when you mentioned the Singaporean story. You said Singapore has not got the natural resources we have in this country, but Singapore was able to transform from a third world country to a first world country. I was touched and inspired by that story.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, The SLPP is in governance and the Speaker is now serving his second term. Naturally, one is expected to learn a lot from first experience. I see before me a Speaker that has made lots of changes in this Parliament. I believe we are going to have a better Sixth Parliament. It is also clear that we have one of the youngest parliamentary leadership in the persons of the Majority Leader, Deputies and Whips. We have to employ our energy, experiences and the Political Will of His Excellency the President to move this country forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, potentially, our country is one of the richest countries in the world. We are rich because we have fertile soil and abundant rainfall. Sierra Leoneans are amongst the most brilliant people. We are highly educated and our country's population is very small. I have usually wondered what is keeping us in this



state of backwardness. We have to move this country forward. You said that we have to respect time. I am certain that time is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some documents have taken years in certain offices and they have gathered dust. A document that should take just two days ends up taking weeks. How can we progress as a Nation? So, when you spoke about respect for time, I became very much interested. I want to assure you that change has to begin with the self. I have been inspired and I want to ensure that whatever I am doing, from now on, I will respect time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you also spoke about unity. You said if we have to follow the path of development like what Singapore did, we have to unite. Singapore was heavily disadvantaged, while Sierra Leone was advantaged due to abundant rainfall and mineral resources we have in this country. I am a Pan-Africanist. I have my heroes like Kwame Nkrumah, Ahmed Sekou Toure and many others. I have never spoken about tribalism or ethnicity. I talk about those issues positively. I am African first and Sierra Leonean second. We have to think Sierra Leonean. One thing that has destroyed our country is the issue of tribalism. I believe weak politicians always talk about tribes and ethnic groups. If you are a strong person, you have to put Sierra Leone first. You spoke about unity and we have to lead by example, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President. My life has always been full of struggles. I have been PMDC before. I have never been a member of the ruling party. I struggled to become Independent MP. I came to this Parliament as a Member of a political party. It was a very small political party and a new one for that matter. I have come here as an Independent Member of Parliament and am now as SLPP MP. I am enjoying a lot of relief. My life has just been struggle, but the President has made it possible to attract people from other political parties to join the SLPP.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Emerson S. Lamina was brought from the C4C to the SLPP. Myself, Honourable Quintin Salia-Konneh and Honourable Lolloh Tongi were all Independent MPs, but we have been brought to the SLPP. This is

leadership by example. I am not joking; I am saying something very serious. Mr Speaker, I am saying this because I am a Member of the SLPP. The 2023 elections are over and my purpose in the SLPP is to ensure that the SLPP wins the next election in 2028. When I say this, I say this with all seriousness. The fight or the struggle is on and the fight has to start from here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you spoke about oversight activities. You said we did not perform as expected. Well, I expect the leadership, under your watch, to sit down and talk to them; otherwise it is going to be business as usual. If we really involve in effective oversight activities that can help the government to produce results, we have to ensure that moneys allocated to the MDAs are taken care of. Development has to move from the speeches into the communities. The oversight activities are key and there are certain things we cannot say here, but we have to be very serious. When we go on oversight, it is to make sure that the oversight is performed diligently and it should not be something else. This is very important because we cannot continue to develop only on paper. The President has a good will.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have travelled out of this country through the Lungi Airport severally. The last time I entered the new airport I was excited. There are a lot of things the President has done, but people are denying the fact. When you go to Lungi, you cannot deny the new airport because it is a first class airport. We want to see more of that in his second term. We all have a role to play in our Committees and as individuals. I was excited and I know His Excellency has a lot of plans, but he cannot do it alone. There has to be unity and teamwork. As Members of Parliament, we have a serious work to do. Sometimes we do things that are helpful. We have to take a resolution here that the Sixth Parliament should not be business as usual. The Committees have to be very effective if they are to be respected. We have to move away from the old path and follow the path of Singapore to transform our country from a third world country to a first world country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to come to Honourable Mohamed Bangura. We started the political journey together in the PMDC. I know him very well, Mr

Speaker. Mr Speaker, I need your protection because what I am saying is not out of order. I am inspired by Mr Speaker. I want to thank Honourable Mohamed Bangura for being here with us. Mr Speaker, he decided to come and represent his people. I listened to his speeches and he said he was inspired by being a Sierra Leonean. I am happy that he came here because he thought it is right as a Sierra Leonean citizen to be here. I want to acknowledge his effort. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank all Honourable Members who have taken the Floor so far. We are finished with the front row.

*[Suspension of S.O 5[2] being 12:00 noon]*

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, please listen to me as I shower praises on this great son of the soil. He is a patriot who cares for the development and growth of this nation. The first time I heard the name Dr Abass Chernor Bundu was when elders of this country were praising him as a man that is carefully educated with a good track record. I know him as a man full of integrity. He is a Sierra Leonean that is very firm and believes in the true text of diction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the Fifth Parliament, the use of the word 'Honourable' was all over the place and everybody was using the 'Honourable' title. Mr Speaker delivered a landmark ruling and interpreted the word 'Honourable' and how it must be used. After that ruling, I was doing research to enable me participate in this felicitation speech that I also took my time to look up as to how the 'Honourable' is being used. It is a title for Members of Parliament, but in other countries Prime Ministers and the like. So, I was really touched by the ruling you delivered and I hope Sierra Leoneans will actually heed to that ruling. The title, Honourable can only be used by those who deserve it. Being a Lawyer, if you use the Honourable, you cannot use Esquire. If you use the word 'Honourable,' you cannot use Mr and when you are an Honourable, you deserve the highest level of respect. You would agree with me that respect is bestowed upon you according to the way you behave in society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are the reasons the drafters of the 1991 Constitution couched Section 97 as properly put today by Mr Speaker that as a Member of Parliament, your conduct, both in and out of the Well of Parliament, counts. I know the Speaker would go down in history as somebody who presided over a hung Parliament, but only few people can handle such difficult situations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there were time when the Speaker would have to go out of the Well, particularly when pepper spray was used. There were also times when the Speaker lost his voice in trying to calm down difficult situations. I have always said that no Sierra Leonean would have done a better job than he did. No wonder all of us decided to vote overwhelmingly, so that he takes that seat again for another term of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you are not only a Speaker to some of us, but a fatherly figure and a role model. There were times you speak the King's Language, we would have to Google it to get the meaning, so that when we have the opportunity to speak English, we can also use it correctly. I consider you as a polymath. He is not only a Lawyer, but a linguist. For one to attract this world for more than 53 years, it only shows the excellence in which you have handled this office.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I became a Member of Parliament, I thought the job of a Speaker was just to sit and preside over us, but when I started visiting your Chamber, I came to know that you also read every Bill passed by this House word by word, sentence by sentence for corrections before they are sent for printing. This was the time when I understood the enormity of the job you are doing as a Speaker. This is because we usually make many amendments during the Committee Stage and you want the amendments to be incorporated correctly. For an Act to be read coherently and make sense, it takes time, knowledge and commitment. This is what you did in the Fifth Parliament. You deserve all the good wishes that any Sierra Leonean can shower on you. I assure you that you would go down in history and posterity would smile at you for the work that you have done for this Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was telling a sister that the Speaker I know is somebody who is also an Economist. He is an Economist because he does not believe in frivolous expenditures. When you present your budget to him, he would scrutinise it and that is the quality of a very good leader. Mr Speaker, on this day today I want you to know how much we appreciate you and how much we look forward to your success in this Parliament.

**HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS:** Mr Speaker, with your permission, the Honourable Hindolo M. Gavao should mind his words.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Mr Speaker, I will do that and I take the queue to wish you success in this Sixth Parliament. Mr Speaker, like the other speakers said, we do not anticipate you facing the challenges that you faced in the Fifth Parliament. We anticipate sound debate, and an objective and progressive opposition. This is because when you oppose objectively, you teach the ruling bench what to do, but when you oppose simply because you want to oppose, then you create problem for the smooth running of the House. We do not look forward to boycott when progressive Bills come to this House. We no longer look forward to fist fight; we no longer look forward to pepper sprays being sprayed here.

I wish you well in this Sixth Parliament and on my own personal behalf, I assure you that I would work assiduously for the success of the Sixth Parliament. I thank you *[Applause]*.

**HON. SAA E. LAMINA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on all recognised and established protocols for and on behalf of the people of Kono District to congratulate you on your resounding re-election as Speaker of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the demonstration of you fatherly role during the Fifth Parliament can be second to none. Honourable Members, even where I was as Minority Leader of an opposition party, you created a space to demonstrate my prowess in airing out the views of the people of Sierra Leone in general and Kono District in

particular. I congratulate you as well as your Deputy Speaker. I think I must also congratulate the Deputy Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Fifth Parliament cannot be compared to any other Parliament. When I looked at the Hansard, it can only be compared to the 2002 Parliament of Sierra Leone. Under your watch, we passed about 84 laws, 350 Protocols, Agreements, Committee Reports etc. We also ratified 71 Statutory and Constitutional Instruments. Thus is unprecedented, Mr Speaker. I am not too sure that the people of Zimbabwe and those of ECOWAS countries will forget you in a hurry. The Constitution of Zimbabwe was your brainchild. You left an indelible ink in Zimbabwe. I am sure the former President of Zimbabwe, Mr Robert Mugabe will be smiling in his grave for the work you did on their Constitution. We would not have seen or known the diction called ECOMOG without your handiwork. It was you as an Executive Secretary of ECOWAS that fashioned the name ECOMOG. Through him and the help of God Sierra Leone's eleven [11] years war ended when the ECOMOG intervened.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to commend the Speaker for being effective, efficient and excellent. It was through hard work, intelligence and dexterity he was able to sail the ship of the Fifth Parliament. Mr Speaker, I am too sure that in this Sixth Parliament, the dreams of the Rt. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio which he designed as the five big changers are achieved. One of the dreams is to feed the people of Sierra Leone. You are expected to encourage Bills that will deal with inland and swamp farming, animal husbandry, cash crop production and agricultural extension. This should be our priority and you will be facilitating the swift passage of Bills to support the five big changers. We want to feed the people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am SLPP. I am too sure you would encourage us to consolidate the gains of the human capital and the presidential initiative of the five big changers, which is the Youth Employment Scheme [YES]. It is the dream of the President to give 500,000 jobs. It is going to be 100,000 jobs per year and he has that capacity. The mining sector alone can provide 300,000 jobs for the people of Sierra Leone, including family members and it has that capacity. Mr Speaker, please facilitate

the swift passage of Bills that will bring effectiveness and efficiency in the Public Sector. This is very important, Mr Speaker. We want to see public officers contesting with members in the INGO and NGOs. People should learn to do their work with time line, so that there is effectiveness and efficiency in the Public Sector. We want to see those Bills here. I want to see Bills that would improve technology as well as architectural infrastructure in this nation. I am sure the district I represent, which is Kono District, will surely and fairly receive from the largess the President has promised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must also convey my felicitation to the Deputy Speaker of the Sixth Parliament. He is a fighter during our University days in the early 2000. He fought and he conquered in the Student Union presidency. I am sure you will support and complement the effort of Mr Speaker, so that we can have a productive Parliament that will boost the socio-economic activities through good legislations. I commend you highly and I know will improve the Sixth Parliament to greatness; greatness that will land the SLPP to another victory in 2028.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to my colleagues in the red to come and serve their people. Many years ago, I read about Mr Nelson Mandela and the apartheid in South Africa and Mr Nelson Mandela did say no man is born hating one another because of political belief, because of colour or because of religion. He said: "If they hate they can be taught how to love, for love comes more naturally than its opposite." That is what Mr Nelson Mandela said. I want to remind my brothers and sisters in the red that this is their House because they were voted for by the people of Sierra Leone. You cannot afford to do disservice to them; you cannot afford to turn blind eyes on them. Please come to your House, so that we develop Sierra Leone together. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker [*Applause*].

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his very kind words.

**HON. WUYATTA B. SONGA:** Point of observation, Mr Speaker. I am sure all of us would want to say a word or two, so let us limit ourselves to five minutes each. That is what colleagues are saying. I know my learned colleague is going to be on the podium for quite long and we cannot afford to be here for the rest of the day.

**HON QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank my sister for her observation, but I am going to shock her. Mr Speaker, I promise I will not talk for more than one minute. I want to thank you for making yourself available to serve us for the second time. When I heard what you had achieved in life, I really do not know whether I should feel motivated, challenged or demotivated. This is because I realised, as an individual, that you have achieved so much. You have experience almost in everything and yet some of us are still struggling to achieve ¼ of what you have achieved today. So, this is a kind of demotivation to some of us, even though we should be motivated by what you have gained as an individual.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me state this fact that I am a Member of Parliament today because of you. This is something you might not know, but that is the fact. As mentioned by Honourable Chief Whip, when we were in school, our English teacher, Mr Massaquoi was always following parliamentary activities. So, he always challenged us to follow parliamentary activities. You know during those days, there were no televisions; you have to manually convey yourself to the city and most of the time, we were at the gallery watching you speak. We were always motivated by your speeches in this Parliament. You were the reason I decided to move away from becoming an economist to a politician, thinking that I was going to speak like you. Unfortunately, I could not do 1/10 of what you did. However, I am privileged to share the same Chamber with you today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was a police officer and you had a facility very close to the central police station. You were very innocent, peaceful and young with your silver hair. So, we always admired you and that was when I decided to be like this man. Today, you have not failed me and the people of Sierra Leone. You have not also failed this Parliament. I believe your administration during the Fifth Parliament showed that you are above every situation you find yourself; and for every situation you find yourself, you always manage such situations well. In the Fifth Parliament, you encountered difficult times. Sometimes Members of the Opposition described you as a bias Speaker; and at some other points, Members from the government bench would



also say you were bias. That professionally shows that you were in the middle and a good administrator. It is our hope for you to continue the good work and that will be a legacy that you will leave for us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during our school days, we used to go to our villages and our grandfathers would ask us to sit with them in moonlight to explain their success stories. You have gained so much and some of us want to get your achievements. So, if you have time, ask us to sit with you, so that you can explain your stories; how you were able to excel to this point; how you were able to meander your way through; how you were able to achieve so much. I think that will be a motivating exercise for most of us because some of us want to be like you or even more than you. If you do not know how to do it, then you will press the wrong buttons. So, we want you to create a special time, so that we can gain from your experiences.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not drop the microphone, if I fail to talk about the Deputy Speaker. We happened to be in the same club. It is a gentleman's club where you will be taught how to comport yourself in public; what to do and what not to do. He is a friend to everybody. I have no doubt in his administrative skills. He is a gentleman, an astute and erudite lawyer who always wins cases. I have no doubt in him. Mr Speaker, you have to pay more attention to the Deputy Speaker, so that he can gain from your administration, so that whenever you are not around, our Deputy Speaker will be able to sail the ship.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end by thanking the main Acting Opposition Leader for making himself available in the Sixth Parliament. For him, Sierra Leone comes first. This is a history making decision you have taken. You might not be liked by few people, but let me tell you that the whole world is looking at you; the people of Sierra Leone are looking at you. You are making history for yourself, your family and everybody. Please keep the good work and continue to be part of the debates of this House. I thank you very much for making yourself available.

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

**HON. EMILIA L. TONGI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I actually admired the beautiful words Honourable Members are pouring on you. I am really mesmerised by the show of love for the Speaker. You are a living encyclopaedia. When I heard you saying that at the age of forty, the President of Nigeria asked you to continue your job in Nigeria and you gently declined because the job was actually giving you silver hair.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we were closing Parliament, I heard the news that Mr Speaker is not coming back. A lot of people felt bad about the news. Some of us decided to meet and talk to him to continue his work, but he kept telling us that he was tired and he wanted to rest. We know the tough times you went through because it has not been easy at all, especially with the Opposition. It was not easy, but you sailed through. We sometimes sat to gossip about him saying, S.O [2], dis pa ya e don go bak to APC oh. We were saying this because you were not bias at all. When it comes to issues relating to right and wrong, he always delivers justice. You went through that successfully in the Fifth Parliament. I was very pleased and we became friends.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I personally want to thank the Speaker. He has been my big brother for quite some time now and I have known him for the past twenty years. He has always kept that quality as a big brother. Today again, you have become our Speaker in this country. You are doing a very good job and I would not like to repeat all what my colleagues have said. They have said beautiful things about you and it shows how we love you in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to turn my attention to the new female Members of Parliament. We want to thank His Excellency the President for the achievement of 30% female representation in governance. I want to tell my sisters that being a female Member of Parliament is not fancy. Let us help the President to take this country to another level by doing our work assiduously. We have to help implement all his programmes. Let us help ourselves. I know that Rome was not built in a day, but we can do the best we could to help His Excellency proves to the world that the idea of achieving the 30% female representation in this Well was not a child's play. It was well planned. I am sure these female parliamentarians will make the President proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to entreat these female Members of Parliament to help bring more women on board. However, the President will only do more for us if we prove ourselves by doing tangible things that are sustainable for this country. So, this is my advice and as a former first female Independent Member of Parliament ever in this country, I am so proud, satisfied and happy to stand here to talk to you under the umbrella of the SLPP. That has always been my dream. I spent five years struggling in this Parliament and sometimes I left here with tears on my cheeks because I was not what I wanted to be. I was forced to do what I did. I am here as SLPP Member of Parliament and I am very happy for that. I am sure my father in the grave, who also wanted me to be an SLPP Member of Parliament, will be saying my daughter has finally made it and I am happy for her.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please stay with us and God bless you. I also hope to see you in 2028. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Member for your very kind sentiments. Let me divert attention for a moment from that row to the left side of me. I will start with the Honourable Paramount Chief. I think the right side has dominated the debate this morning. I will turn to the left now.

**HON P.C. HAJA FATMATA BINTU KOROMA MEAMA KAJUE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the politicians have spoken. We thank them very much. We, as Paramount Chiefs, have heard them very well. We thank them for the lecture. I will call it lecture that you have given to us this morning.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my colleagues, we do not have much to say. We just want to tell you that we have heard what you said about the last Parliament and what you expect from us in the Sixth Parliament. We assure you that we will do our level best, so that we work towards your satisfaction and that of the country at large. We want development in our Nation. Like what everybody has said, there were lots of things that went wrong in the last Parliament. I am sure the Paramount Chiefs did not give you much problem at all. Yes, we did not give Mr Speaker much problem [Undertone]. We will continue to act in that manner and even better. We are assuring

you of our support to see that the agenda of the country goes through. We will always give you our support; we will always make sure we live up to your expectation. We assure you of that, Mr Speaker.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Paramount Chief for her kind sentiments.

**HON P.C. FORAY CYRIL GONDOR II:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. From all what have been said about the Speaker and what the Speaker has told us about himself, I want to start my felicitations with a quotation from the book titled, Things Fall Apart. It says: "A chick that will grow into a cock can be spotted the very day it hatches." This is a novel I read forty years ago when I was in secondary school, but I can still remember some of the interesting things in that book. Mr Speaker, your achievements over the years that you have highlighted are enormous and it is not a surprise to some of us. I personally admire your courage amidst the challenges and confrontations you went through during the fifth Parliament. Indeed, you demonstrated good leadership qualities here. I want to assure you of our cooperation and fullest support this time around. This is because we want this Parliament to be a force to reckon with, not only in the sub-region, but the whole of Africa and even beyond. I want to assure you that we the traditional leaders will continue to give you our fullest support.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the history of Sierra Leone Parliament will never be complete without mentioning the name of Dr Abass Chernor Bundu. May God bless you and I wish you success in your tenure of office. I thank you.

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

**HON. MARGARET F. JOHNSON:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I represent Kailahun District. So, I want to first of all thank the Speaker and to also congratulate him on his re-election as our Speaker for the Sixth Parliament. I want to also say thank him for giving us the opportunity and insight to know the man

behind the title, Mr Speaker. It is an honour and a privilege for me as a new Member of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in his speech, the Speaker emphasised on hard work and he gave us some good figures of facts about the performance of the Fifth Parliament even though there were challenges. I want to reassure you that the new Members of the Sixth Parliament will ensure that we work harder, so that we can produce more than what the Fifth Parliament had done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to S.O.[34]. As new Members, we are struggling a bit. Our leader highlighted few things relating to the Tablets and ICT. I want to know where we can sign. We were told that we have to do certain things. I just want to appeal to Mr Speaker to provide basic information or instructions that will be of help to new Members before the commencement of a sitting. We are not quite sure where to start from at all. I think I am speaking the minds of all the new Members of Parliament. We are learning and the learning process has to be speeded up by providing the appropriate instructions or information. It will be easier if we could get the right information on time.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and with time, you would get to know us better. We will show our performance in this Sixth Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her kind sentiments. I think she has made a very important point. I know the new Members have gone through some form of induction. I think in addition to the oral presentation at the induction, it will be useful if the essential points can also be induced to you. I think one or two pages as guide will be helpful. So, the Clerk and the Legislative Department should be able to do two pages at least, just highlighting the key points of what is expected of a new Member on a daily basis, so that they will become accustomed to their work. Thank you very much for that observation. I think it will be taken on board.

**HON JIBRILA SURMOIJUEH:** Mr Speaker, my name is Honourable Jibrila Surmoijueh from Bonthe District. I feel overwhelmed and life fulfilled to stand before you and the Honourable Members to thank you for your leadership and your speakership. In your speech, you carefully highlighted your expectations from us, and by extension rolling out your biography. At some points, I realised that I was not only seeing a Speaker of this honourable Parliament, but I was looking at a mentor. I see you as an inspiration. The achievements you have made over the years in academia and your professional life could be possibilities for some of us. With all the things the old Members of Parliament are expressing in terms of your leadership qualities exhibited in the Fifth Parliament, it could have unfolded as an ordinary elusion to some of us from the outside community. Today, however, we are part of this family and I am grateful to learn from you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speaker mentioned his admiration for the late Prime Minister of Singapore and he showered accolades on the late man for transforming Singapore from a third world nation to a first world nation. One thing I learnt clearly from that was that the late Prime Minister had uninterrupted time in office. I am sure that situation cannot be compared to Sierra Leone because of the challenge of term limit. In Sierra Leone, we keep changing leaderships from one political party to another.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as new Members of Parliament, we will not experience what the last Parliament experienced. It was Hung Parliament with many challenges. My elder brother said that we should work assiduously, in order to ensure that we win the 2028 elections. We can start the work now by ensuring that the Bills we pass here provide the legal platform to democratically proceed with whatever we can as a political party. The leadership of His Excellency the President, as he has manifested in the last five years, will be extoled and celebrated again in this five years. Like Singapore, Sierra Leone will be transformed under this President. I believe with the Speaker's unfolded leadership qualities, he will help us achieve greatness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 92[2] of the 1991 Constitution states: "The Parliament shall also constitute other Committees. You mentioned how you tailored the

other committees to the manifesto. The flagship programme should be supervised by these committees for effective implementation. You said during the Fifth Parliament, Oversight activities fell below expectations. During our engagement with the leadership of the SLPP yesterday, we were told that as new Members of Parliament, we should take the back seats and learn from them. We are very proud of that because if we are to perform effectively and efficiently, we have to learn from them. So, when you tailor these Committees to the big five changers of the President's flagship programme, we will certainly do well.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you again and the entire House.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his very kind sentiments.

**HON. MATTHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, for the records, it is not Section 92, but Section 93 of the 1991 Constitution. I admire him so much.

**HON. ABDUL K. BANGURA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was told that the wise came from the East, but the Honourable Speaker comes from Kamakwie in the North.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to express my gratitude to His Excellency the President of the Republic for his tireless and selfless effort in making difficult decisions like the one that has to do with the Proportional Representation or District Block System. This system helped some of us to be here today. The PR System has helped us to know the strength of political parties. These elections, under the PR System, showed that the SLPP is the most popular party in Sierra Leone. I am so proud to come from the same district with the Speaker and also former flag bearer of the main opposition party. I want you to know that you are not alone; I am with you even though with different ideas. I am happy to share the same district with you.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not say much because we are still learning. Through the help of the Speaker, we will be able to learn and by the grace of God, I will do well for Karene District. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his very kind sentiments.

**HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My own contribution is going to be very brief. I want to start by saying congratulations to the Deputy Speaker. He has been a gentleman during the Fifth Parliament. A man who makes you to believe that there is life after this Parliament. He believes that all of us will meet again somewhere and that is why we should treat people with respect. Thank you Deputy Speaker for who you are and I personally admire you. I have not had the opportunity to acquaint myself very well with him, but the few moments I managed to get a discussion with him made me to realise that he values humans for who they are.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to say thank you for who you are because you have made it easy for people like us, who do not believe in "labelism," SO [2]. In Parliament, we lobby, but when you go beyond lobbying to Labelism, there is a problem. I am sure you are one of those who do not encourage such thing. I think when you show such leadership quality, it makes the work easier for every Member of Parliament. Some of us might be interpreted differently, but we have principles to uphold. You would agree with me that every human being has principles he or she has respect no matter the circumstance or situation. You have to respect your principles and you hold them to high esteem. Some of us will die with what we believe in. The Speaker made it easy because he chose quality over feelings you might have against one another.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that in life, there are people with different perspectives or views about certain situations, but you should not allow them to affect what you are doing. This is very important for this Nation. If you say you are somebody with principles, it is not just what you say, but your actions. You have clearly demonstrated that to some of us. I am sure if you have not done that, some of us would have been depressed in this Parliament and would not have been here. However, you have made the job easy and we are here to perform what we are supposed to do.



Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I personally want to thank you because when I lost my mother, you left Freetown to sympathise with me in Segbwema. With five years that I was here, I lost my dad and my mom of blessed memories. I am sure only good human being can do what you did. It was not the job of a Speaker because it is never part of your job description, but you demonstrated that you are a good leader who can feel the pains of others and empathises with them. This makes you a good human being. Thank you for what you did for me. Some of us are looking highly up to you as a father figure to some of us that are fatherless today. You are somebody that motivates a lot of learners. There are lots of Members of Parliament who are looking for certain people to learn from them. Well, I must tell them that they should not learn everything they see. I implore them to learn things that match their personalities. Parliament is a fraternity. This is because when you are outside, it looks different than when you are inside. This is why one should not go with the flow. You have to be yourself and learn what you can learn that will impact you positively and the people you are here to represent. Do not copy everything. Some of us learnt the hard way and I am glad for that because it makes me a better person. I think I am more prepared than ever to face different challenges in my life.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we continue in this Sixth Parliament, I want to encourage you [which I probably know that you might not need], to do what you can do best and do not allow favouritism or anything to affect what you do to treat people differently. This is because posterity will judge you for the things you do today and that might also affect your children and grandchildren. The way you treat others one way or the other will affect how people treat your family members who are not in Parliament today, but are in different walks of life. Some of us learnt this from our parents, especially my father. You have to behave the way you want others to behave to your family members in future. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable lady for her contribution.

**HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my statement with a quote from Matthew Chapter 20, verse 25-28. It says: "**Jesus tells**

**his disciples that leaders should not exercise authority over people; instead, whoever that wants to become great must lower himself to be a servant. Leaders must realise that serving others is the only way to lead with a pure heart, free of pride and arrogance.”** Mr Speaker, I cited this Biblical quotation because I saw this in you during the fifth Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like what others have said, a lot happened in the Fifth Parliament and I noticed your patience. I saw the way you exercised a lot of patience. I was seated on the other side and I saw how you showed love to certain people, especially those in the Opposition. You encouraged them a lot, in spite of the way you were disrespected. Sometimes those on the other side would even want to fight them, but you always protect them. That is good leadership and I want to thank you for exhibiting those qualities. The Fifth Parliament could have been more chaotic, but you used your experience to control every situation. I want to thank you for that. You really served as true Sierra Leonean.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from what the Speaker read to us, it shows that S.O[2] u na blessed pikin to Salone. You really served Sierra Leone with all your heart. If it were for money, you would have just come and sit down, but what you have done for Sierra Leone is great. You were representing Sierra Leone, but you decided to come and serve in your own country. We will not just bless you, but also your children and grandchildren. They will surely reap from your blessings because you served this country diligently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the way the Fifth Parliament was, it was only by the grace of God. You are very prayerful and I think this is why you are a great leader. You are doing what God has sent you to do and God will surely give you the wisdom to continue to serve this Nation. Like what you have said, we do not just need leaders; we do not just need elected members or appointees; but we need unity. You said: **“we must be united to transform Sierra Leone.”** We can never be united without having good leaders like you and President Julius Maada Bio. A lot has happened in this country in the past five years that would have created a war that would have caused

lots of problems. However, it was due to the good leadership of President Julius Maada Bio and even you, as a leader of Parliament, that most of the things that would have brought war were suppressed and stability was restored.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our Deputy Speaker also served in the same capacity. For those of us in the last Parliament, when you walked along the Leadership corridor where the offices of the Clerk, Majority Leader and Deputy Speaker are located, you would find out that the Deputy Speaker's Office was like a clinic. You will see lots of people visiting him, maybe not for money, but some were coming with other problems. I believe as a man of God, he served those people. That is why many people are happy for his re-election. As Sierra Leoneans, our hearts and minds should be for the good of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform our colleagues who have not come to represent their people to know that when they finally come to Parliament, we should put Sierra Leone first. We have to respect our political parties, but we are here for our people. For me, whatever I do here will reflect back to the people of Kono District. So, if you continue to boycott Parliament, you will not be here to take part in making good laws. We want the lives of the people to improve; but if you are not here, then you will have yourselves to blame. Whatever we are doing here is for our country we want to be first in the Sub-region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I appeal that the opportunities you gave to the female Members of Parliament in the last Parliament are also given to us in the Sixth Parliament. Our traditional people used to say women are the weaker sex. I however want to state here that we are not the weaker sex. We just need consultations. We have brilliant ideas that can help this country improve. That is why our President said this country will never succeed without women. He has said that over and over again that the women have to be brought on board. If today the women are being brought on board, we have to work hard to prove ourselves. We have to work to ensure that the number of women in Parliament increases again in 2028. We should not allow this number to decrease at all. Mr Speaker, for those of us who were in the Fifth Parliament,

we did not only speak in here to show our people that we are representing them, but we went to our communities to tell our people that we are working for them and we are working with them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate you and to also assure you that the female parliamentarians from Kono District are ready to work with you. We are committed to ensuring that this Parliament is peaceful. The SLPP is a peaceful party and when our friends or brothers and sisters come, we will address any chaotic situation peacefully. I know that they will come. We will ensure peace to reign in this Parliament. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her kind sentiments.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAM-LAMIN:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is a honour and privilege for me as Honourable Joseph Williams Lamin from Bo District, Bongor Jaiama and Wunde to be here. My colleagues have expressed good sentiments about you and I want to say you deserve it. My colleagues have expressed their opinions about you and the Deputy Speaker. It was not a mistake by the President, after consultations, for you to be elected to occupy such positions in 2018. Owing to your good work, you have been re-elected to occupy the same positions. It was after series of consultations we decided to vote for you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Fifth Parliament was marred with lots of problems. During the heated debate at the Bintumani International Conference Center, I wanted to run away with you when my colleagues started throwing tables and other objects at you. When you looked at me and said: **"I want to stay here to accomplish my work."** From that moment, I saw your commitments and the values you wanted to maintain. You represented us well at the ECOWAS because you performed exceptionally well. We were so proud of you. As the Chief Whip said, you were rated to be the best.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed, we promised to restore the Athens of West Africa. You wanted to bring those good memories that existed in our society. For this

reason, I refer the House to Section 13[d] of the 1991 Constitution, which talks about enhancing the power, prestige and good name of the State and to defend the State and render national service. We want people who have joined us to cultivate this and that is the same sentiments I want to shower on our colleague Honourable Member from Karene District. I consider him as the Leader of the Opposition. He has cultivated a sense of nationalism. He placed the interest of Sierra Leone above all others. He is here representing his people. He was duly voted for and that is why he is here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to his colleagues who are out there to come and represent their people. They were duly elected as Members of Parliament to fulfil certain duties. Again, during the heated debate at the International Conference Center, I was interviewed by AYV Television in relation to what was happening. I told the journalist that we were just having some difficulties and we would overcome them and move forward. We are here today based on what we achieved, especially with the PR System. Nobody wanted that to happen, but we knew it would be good for Sierra Leone and the leadership of His Excellency the President. He is a leader for Sierra Leone and not for a particular region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the Speaker's presentation, he mentioned Section 97[a&b] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. I also want to advise the new Members of Parliament to take that provision in good faith. The integrity of this House should be held in high esteem. The integrity of people we are representing starts right from here. How do we represent them? I was at the National Civil Registration Authority when somebody asked for my opinion on another institution. As a responsible and senior citizen, I said that was not the right platform for me to answer that question. It is not my duty to interpret another MDA's responsibility or to tell you whether they are doing well or not. If I was on oversight activity and you asked me to express my opinion of which I have the status of the High Court judge, I will express my opinion with sincerity and objectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us come from different family, educational and cultural backgrounds. We have to respect the people we are representing here. If a

colleague says no to something, you have to respect his/her opinion and you should not use it as a yardstick to judge the person. A rich man yesterday could be a poor man today. All those sentiments are not good sentiments. We should avoid things that are un-parliamentary. When you are a parliamentarian, you speak as a parliamentarian; and when you are an honourable, you speak as an Honourable Member. If an Honourable Member is invited to represent his/her political party or Sierra Leone or the people who voted him/her, it your duty to report to those you represented. During the Fifth Parliament, I was invited to the United State of America in August for a meeting and the lessons learnt were communicated to every part of this country. They were sent to Falaba Koinadugu, Moyamba, Bonthe, Bo and all other districts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cherish and admire the leadership of Mr Speaker and we want him to continue his good work. You told us that you had a tough time with the bloggers who wanted to pull you down. You told us that despite the challenges you encountered, you were able to stand the test of time. Those with basic knowledge in engineering will agree with me that when the Rose Royse Engine was manufactured, it had over twenty engineers in the room. When the engine was ignited, they were watching because they wanted to know where they were going until they landed. Well, Sierra Leone is watching you, Mr Speaker; the world is watching all of us. We are proud of you, but you and your Deputy Speaker should work together for the benefit of this Nation. I want to doff my hat to you. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

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

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to have a bite on this debate. I want to first of all thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Commanded-in-chief of the Sierra Leone Armed Forces. I want to also congratulate him for his re-election as President. Today, if we are boastful of the Fifth Parliament being hardworking and successful, it is because we had a platform from the Executive Arm, who is the President. Mr Speaker, I went through archives and discovered that since independence, no President has ever treated this Parliament with seriousness like President Maada Bio. He gave us the

leverage to do what we did under the leadership of Mr Speaker. So, I will not send felicitations to the Speaker without referencing the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that the Speaker has a wealth of experience and he was the best Speaker for the Fifth Parliament. I repeat, he was the best Speaker for the Fifth Parliament. He was the best person to be the Speaker of this House. I am not speaking to you. I am addressing the Speaker. You are a very senior Member and you have to take your time *[Undertone]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nature of the Fifth Parliament was a difficult one. If we had a half-baked Speaker, all the beautiful things we are saying today about the Fifth Parliament, would not have been said. So, we want to thank you for a job well done. I want to confess that we used to accuse you as being bias. As Honourable Members, we should not be afraid to say the truth just because we are seated before the Speaker. I do not want to call names, but I have heard Honourable Members saying that the Speaker was bias. The Opposition also said that the Speaker was bias. We have to behave honourably because this is very important. We have heard people saying we used to bash at him. Why are we jittery? Why do we want to deny the fact? Let us put aside pettiness and say the truth. Why are you condemning me for saying the truth? Please allow me to express my opinion. You are not new MPs *[Undertone]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, this is the second time you are responding to undertones. I am expecting you to know how to treat undertones.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** I know Mr Speaker, but some of these undertones should be corrected. I also want to thank the Honourable Members who participated in the Fifth Parliament. This is because during Fifth Parliament, we had three hundred and one [301] sittings and enacted eighty three [83] Bills into laws. It was because we had the leverage and the platform to do so. We succeeded in enacting progressive laws. This is why am thanking Honourable Members of the Fifth Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also ratified two hundred and eight [208] Loan and Grant Agreements; fifty-one [51] Protocols and Conventions; one hundred and twenty one ([121] Committees and Delegations Reports.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, the only correction I need to make is that we enacted eighty-four [84] Bills into law and not eighty-three [83].

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** That is a minute difference, Mr Speaker. It is just a difference of one.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, it is for the records, Honourable Member.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** Thank you Mr Speaker. Well, most Honourable Members do not even know this information, especially the Honourable Member from Pujehun. He is just making noise. They do not know all these data at all. The Honourable Shiaka M. Sama from Pujehun does not know the data I have just presented.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one major thing you highlighted in your presentation was the poor performance of Committees. Mr Speaker, if we really want to do due diligence, Committee activities need to be funded by Parliament.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O.34 on a Point of Order. I do not want my colleague to misinterpret the Speaker. The Speaker did not say the Committees performed poorly. The Speaker said some parliamentary Committees did not present their reports and some reports were presented late.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** Honourable Chief Whip, please do not misconstrue me. Please listen to what I said. I said the Committee work was not effective and I must have to confess. There are Committees here who only went on oversight once in every Session. That is not enough. This is why I am saying that it has to be a different ball game this time around. If we want it to be very effective, the Committees need to be adequately funded by Parliament. Let us say every quarter the Committees go on oversight. You are still misconstruing me. Take care of your words [*Undertone*].



**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, treat the undertones as undertones.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** Noted, Mr Speaker. We have heard from other colleague Honourable Members that we want the Sixth Parliament to be more proactive and performance driven than the Fifth Parliament. One of the things that we need to do is that the leadership needs to take into cognizance of the fact that Committees need to go on oversight not once in a session because you will not do due diligence. If the Committees go on oversight every quarter and they fail to lay their reports, they should be queried. That is why we have the Whip to monitor effectively. When committees are funded to go on oversight and they fail to lay their reports, let them be queried. I know this Parliament is going to be different from the Fifth Parliament.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, it is not the duty of the Whips to monitor committees activities. I want my colleague to know this because there are already supervising committees. It is not the responsibility of the Whips. I thank you.

**HON. CHRISTOPHER K. VANDY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am quite aware, but the Whips are there to maintain discipline and that is a disciplinary issue. When you fail to report, it is a breach of the disciplinary rules. You have a holistic responsibility in this Well to ensure that Committees live up to their mandates. You have every right to request for funds to finance these Committees. If a Committee fails to lay its report, you have to bring it to the attention of Mr Speaker.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Honourable Member, what you are saying is quite different except if my colleague is asking you to include this to our responsibilities. However, that has not been our responsibility because there are supervising Committees that are responsible for that. Again, when moneys are given to Committees, the Whips are not informed because it is not our responsibility. So, we cannot go and start asking. I thank you very much.

**HON. KEKURA C. VANDY:** Well, we leave it for another day. This debate is about felicitations. If it were a normal debate, I would have more to say about this.

Nevertheless, I do not regret bringing it up at all, but I do not want us to digress from what we have on the Floor [*Undertone*]. Mr Speaker, the other problem is there were lot of Honourable Members who wanted to speak, but they were not given the opportunity to do so. A lot happened in this Well. If there were mistakes, I am sure they can be corrected. I would not want that to happen in the Sixth Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to extend my regards to my colleague on the other side, Honourable Mohamed Bangura for displaying a sense of responsibility. We love him and we will continue to love him for telling the people of Sierra Leone that he is a true citizen of this country. He loves his people and he is being voted for by his people he is representing here. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member. Can we limit our contributions to two minutes at this point, Honourable Members, so that we can wrap up and go for lunch?

**HON. MARIAMA M. ZOMBO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me this wonderful opportunity. I am Honourable Mariama Munia Zombo from Pujehun District. I want to thank you for your inspiring speech, especially for us the women. It is an opportunity to be part of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, especially for the women of Pujehun District who did not have a voice in the Fifth Parliament. However, there are two of us today in this Parliament and we are extremely happy. We appreciate the Government of the President for making this possible for us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to say that it is important for you to have a gender lens. When taking decisions about what to do for the women who are coming to Parliament, we have to look at capacity building. This capacity building could be ICT and public speaking. We need capacity building with a gender lens. We are different in the roles we play as women and men. This is because there are special needs for women and men. We want you to recognise this as important. There are women here with lots of experience. There are women who have done policy and legislative works. So, we are asking that you to place us in Committees where we would love to work or where we have experience, so that we can enjoy our work blissfully.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want us to be aware that Parliament is different now because there are more women and we need more respect. We need to change the status quo and recognise our needs and these needs have to be respected. I want to thank you for leading the passing of the GEWE Act. This is a huge opportunity not only for us who are in the legislative environment, but also for those who are out there trying to create an impact. They are also ready to contribute towards the development of Sierra Leone. This is very historic achievement and we will never forget what this Government and your team have done. So, we want to thank you again on behalf of all the women of Sierra Leone, including the children who are coming up. We also thank His Excellency the President for appointing young women in his Cabinet. Some were appointed as Cabinet Ministers while others were appointed as Directors. We are truly grateful that the political space is opening up for more young women. It is going to be inspiring for our girls in schools. So, I want to thank you and Honourable Members who were in the Fifth Parliament very much. God bless us all.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her kind sentiments.

**HON. ABU KEMOKAI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am going to be very brief and succinct. I want to thank the Speaker and all Honourable Members for making it to the Sixth Parliament, especially for some of us who were in the Fifth Parliament. I must say we are very grateful to be here again and we want to thank our party for giving us the opportunity to be here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, your leadership in the Fifth Parliament was very effective and efficient. You provided a dedicated leadership that led to enactment of progressive laws. My colleague just mentioned that there are more women in Parliament than any other period in the history of the Sierra Leone Parliament. This is due to the GEWE Act, which was enacted here. This happened because of your effective and efficient leadership. I want to thank all Members of Parliament who were part of that agenda to ensure that we got all these progressive laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank Honourable Members because all of us formed part of the successes that we have been talking about. I have no iota of

doubt that if we succeeded in the Fifth Parliament amidst several challenges, we will succeed in this Parliament and we will record more successes as far as this Parliament is concerned. The number we have now from this side tells us that we are going to have a smooth running of the House. I am sure we achieve our agenda. As a Government, we will succeed in doing what we want to do. We want to continue having more progressive laws because we now have the platform to ensure that we set the pace for the development of our country.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join other speakers to thank the Government and Members of Parliament. I want to congratulate our Deputy Speaker for leading us to a point that is very progressive. We congratulate the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker on their re-elections. I thank you so much.

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

**HON. ALICE K. SANDY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Alice Konya Sandy from Kenema District. I bring you warm greetings from the good people of Kenema. I want to formally congratulate you on your re-election as the Speaker of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone. As a young woman, I feel grateful, privileged and honoured to be here today. I am a proud beneficiary of the GEWE Act. I want to sincerely express my thanks and appreciation to you, our leaders and all others who contributed for making it possible for us to have more women today in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from your speech and the speeches of older Members of Parliament, it clearly shows that you are a man with pedigree and a man who had mustered lots of experience over the years. I want to crave your indulgence to request for trainings, especially for new Members of Parliament. We are learning and we will continue to learn to get better. This is why I want to emphasize on the need for the induction of new Members of Parliament to continue *[Applause]*. I want to end with a quote from Nelson Mandela who once said: "**We must all strive to be inspired by a deep-seated love of our country, without regard to race, colour, gender, or station in life.**" Therefore, it is incumbent on us all to work in the interest of Sierra Leone. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Member and a special thanks for your kind sentiments.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I just want to say thank you for allowing our new Members to speak. This is because in the not too distance future, we will start debating the Presidential Speech. I am overwhelmed over the quality of the new Members of Parliament we have in the Sixth Parliament. So, I want to say a very big thank you for giving them time to talk. Mr Speaker, from now on, we will know those that will be debating the Presidential Speech. I thank you very much.

**HON. PC. BRIMA VICTOR S. KEBBIE III:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I come from Pujehun District and my name is Honourable PC. Brima Victor S. Kebbie. I am an old Member of this House for a very long time. It was only in the last five years that I was absent from this House. I have however decided to come back, so as to share the little we have learnt with the new Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for your brief and good history. I also want to congratulate you for your re-election. When were very young, we have been hearing the names Dr Abass Chernor Bundu, Dr Abdulai O. Conteh, Mr Francis Minah and many others who were in this House. We used to come here to listen what our brothers have learnt. It was interesting to see educated people speaking English. I was surprised when I saw you with silver hair, meaning that you have worked very hard. We want you to continue to do the good work and share your experiences as we move along.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you may have heard about the late P.B. Kebbie who was at one time in this Parliament was my uncle. So, you should not surprise if once in a while we talk about our experiences, so that our colleagues know how Parliament works. I want to assure you that we will do our best to cooperate with you and the House. Some of us decided to come here because we have been seeing people doing the wrong thing, especially those who were in this House. I am glad you came out clearly that people in this House should behave like parliamentarians. We are here to put stop to them or for them to know that they have to behave very well. If all of us do

well, our people will love us to represent them again. We cannot be seen jumping from one place to another.

On that note, I want to once more assure you of my fullest cooperation and the cooperation of all the chiefs. We will make sure that you will enjoy doing your work and even protect you whilst you are at work. Some of us are good enough to protect the Speaker. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Paramount Chief. I am so gratified by that assurance. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** For the new Members of Parliament, let me confirm what you have heard that I have very soft spots for ladies and when you rise to catch my eye, I naturally have the tendency to see you first. The Honourable gentlemen please do not jealous.

**HON. AMIE N. MORIBA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my name is Honourable Amie Nyava Moriba from Bo District. I want to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House. I want to appreciate your efforts, together with His Excellency in passing the GEWE Bill. It has been long overdue. There has been the saying that women belong to the kitchen. I am sure that has changed. You have demonstrated to the world that a woman's place is in governance as well as in the kitchen. Thank you very much for that. I want to assure you that we will make you proud. We are here to learn and to stay. I know it is not an easy task. We will not just come today, learn today and know everything today.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members you spoke about capacity building and I want to assure you that we will attend all the trainings and we will work diligently to achieve the goals for which we were elected. The men used to ask where the women are. I want to assure them that the women are here and we are here for good. We will perform. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I really want to acknowledge what the Honourable Member from Bo has just stated. It is not only the women who are here, but they are women of substance. I am very proud of what we are seeing [*Undertone*].

**HON. RUGIATU T. MUSSAFFA:** My name is Honourable Rugiatu Tarawallie-Mussaffa from Kenema District. I want to congratulate you before I move further. This is the biggest stage some of us ever had in our life time, serving our country. By just listening to you, I have concluded that I am in good hands and I will not drown in this Well. You will always throw a life line to me and my colleagues. Some of us came into politics to give back to our people. I am certain that you have already done what we are doing now. For some of us, it is a duty to lift our people up; and by so doing, I thought this is the stage I can use to do that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I spent a lot of years in the United State of America and I came back to a rude awakening. That has set the pace for me to start a journey to give back to my people. I know that learning from you will make that job very easy. If I can lift one person out of poverty in my area, I would have done a good job. I have looked at you from afar; I have also listened to you from afar; and I have admired you from afar. I admired you because of the work you have done for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my journey to help my people, lift them up, add value to them comes from the inspiration I got from you. I know I will be successful because I am going to put my hands on your shoulders, so that you lead me to the path of success. It is all about changing the image of this country. Nobody is going to get this country out of poverty other than Sierra Leoneans. I do not care how much we get from outside, we have everything we need here and it is just how we can harness it. If all of us put our hands on deck, we will change Sierra Leone. President Bio has already started, but we have to join him.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you again for allowing me to speak as a new Member. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable lady for her very moving and kind sentiments. Please rest assured that I am here for you [*Applause*].

**HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA:** Mr Speaker, you are a wise man. You would have listened to the observation first before thanking the Honourable lady. I just wanted to quickly caution you that I have just received a phone call from Zainab that she is watching you live [*Laughter*].

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, that is a good one and I hope she is going to follow the footsteps of Mohamed Bangura.

**HON. BEATRICE M. KANGBAI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for allowing me to take the Floor. My name is Honourable Beatrice Maaya Kangbai from Bo District. Mr Speaker, I have been admiring you for a long time now. I have been in this Parliament observing every Session and from my observations, it appeared to me that the last Session of this Parliament was a bit fragile. However, due to the fact the Speaker was able to handle the situation, he became successful at the end of the day. I thank him and I hope he will continue in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you mentioned Singapore and the then Leader of that country, I felt sorry for our President in this country. This is because the timeframe is so short, but it is what has been designed for this country, which is a five year period. The then Leader of Singapore ruled for forty years and he was able to transform that country from its previous status to what it is now. However, our President, Dr Julius Maada Bio has done so well during his last five years of reign in terms of ensuring that Sierra Leoneans live in peace. I want to thank him and for you to also pass this message to him. It is difficult for me to reach him at the moment. The women have suffered a lot in this country, including me. I am saying this because we were not included in developmental activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whenever there are economic and health challenges in this country, women are the most vulnerable and we suffer the brunt of those challenges. We could not take care of our children, husbands and our homes generally



because we were handicapped. We are however grateful to the President for taking the bold step to ensure that **30%** quota for women's representation in all spheres of life is achieved. We want to thank the Speaker, Honourable Veronica K. Sesay and the other leaders for ensuring the passage of the GEWE Bill into law. I want to assure you that S.O.[2] *"natin nor dea o, pikin angri o, abo komot befo mi, ar nor get, we di chop mornl"*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure you that poverty is going to be minimised with the elevation of women. Women are now on payroll as Ministers and Members of Parliament. We are now having salaries and these moneys are going to our homes. We are not going to take these moneys to our boyfriends *[Applause]*. I know women will not do that at all. Majority of the women are very proud of their homes. They want to see their homes in a standard way that they can live in. I am sure poverty is going to be minimised. I want to assure you that the women in this Well are going to ensure that they raise the standard of this country to higher heights.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank and congratulate you once again for being re-elected as Speaker of the Sixth Parliament. Your re-election was as a result of the fact that you were so successful in the Fifth Parliament. I am certain that you will be more successful this time. All of us are around you to make sure we give you the best. We will give you our time and that is why we are here. We will ensure that we attend sittings on time and on regular basis.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we have a round of applause for that last statement?

**HON. BEATRICE M. KANGBAI:** *[Applause]* I want to thank you once more and thank you for allowing me to take the Floor. I have more to say, but that will be later.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I cannot thank you enough for the contribution you have just made. You come from Tikonko, which is a town that I have a special affinity. I was given a roof in Bo, when I went to the UCC by Jonathan Bolinton Jumu. I was a little boy by then, but he offered me his resident and I stayed with him for at least three years. I am forever grateful to him and the people from Tikonko.

Honourable Members, I think we should go for lunch if there is nobody seeking to catch my eye. I want to limit it now to those that are standing. There are sixteen Honourable Members seeking to obtain the Floor. Honourable Members, its 2:00 p.m. and I think we have to go for lunch for one hour.

*[The House stood down at 2.00 p.m., and was adjourned to 3:21 p.m.]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the time is 3:21 p.m. There are many of you who want to take the Floor on this particular item, but let us regulate ourselves. I want us to end the debate on this particular item at 4:00 p.m. This means we have forty more minutes. When I give you the Floor, please be considerate in making your presentation. Do it with the realisation that your colleagues also want to contribute.

**HON. BRIMA MANSARAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker on your re-election as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Sixth Parliament. In spite of composition of the Fifth Parliament, you succeeded.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the Speaker's acceptance speech, he spoke about performance and oversight activities, which he said fell below expectations. I want to state here that the underperformance of the Fifth Parliament was as a result of certain circumstances, but I will assure you that this Sixth Parliament will achieve the benchmark set by the Leadership.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we all witnessed the passage of controversial Bills. The Speaker used his skills and tactics to manage the affairs of this House. Those Bills were passed without too many problems. So, I am sure this time will not be an exception at all. I also congratulate you for what you did for Members of Parliament. The key thing was that our concerns or welfare were shared with you and you responded positively. I therefore implore to double those goodies. We are again sharing our concerns, so that the needful is done. I am pretty sure that you will do more for us. I wish you good health and we look forward to seeing how you can improve the lives of Members of Parliament. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I always admire the way you debate. You are always brief, but succinct. It reminds me of what I use to say here that brevity is the soul of wit. You do not need to be too elaborate or monotonous. You only have to hit the nail on the head. I thank you for it.

**HON. RACHAEL M. SESAY-PESSIMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my name is Rachael Mariatu Sesay Pessima from the battle ground of Port Loko District. I am so jealous of some of my colleagues because they have old Members of the Fifth Parliament, but we are unfortunate. Well, we do not have SLPP Members during the Fifth Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, let me put your mind at rest. You have the Speaker because I am Port Loko by birth and Karene by legislation *[Laughter]*.

**HON. RACHAEL M. SESAY-PESSIMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are thankful to God. We are four and we have also started the work for 2028 because we know that our ground is a real battle ground and we are determined to maintain our positions. We are going to work tirelessly to make sure we have more parliamentary seats in Portloko District. On behalf of my colleagues from Port Loko District, I want to say congratulations. I first met you in Kambia during the war. I admired you so much and getting to hear from you makes me feel proud to have a Northerner that is so knowledgeable. We know we have one of the best brains in this country. I thank you for your humility and the wonderful speech you delivered here today. The speech is very motivational and counseling. It gives some of us hope, especially those of us whose parents are not educated. In fact, majority of our family members are not educated. My dad had nine children and seven of us are women. We know exactly where we come from and you would agree with me that the girl child hardly go to school in the North. The boys are always given priority to attend schools. I am very privileged to be one of those my dad sent to school. I want to thank you for your service to the nation and I hope some of us will take your footsteps.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people may think that your speech was just an acceptance speech; but to us, it means a lot. I admire you as I said earlier and I am

pretty sure that most of us are going to learn from you. Please, we are going to bother you with calls because we want to be like you; most of us would want to be like you, especially the ladies. I want you to know that the SLPP female parliamentarians are determined and the President did not make any mistake to give us lots of women in this Parliament. You will see the quality in the SLPP Members of Parliament and we will deliver for this Parliament. It is going to be remarkable and historic. We are well-grounded because some of us have wealth of knowledge. I was a nurse and an entrepreneur for fifteen years. The knowledge I have got from the nursing and entrepreneurship will be brought here and properly utilised in any parliamentary Committee that I will find myself. I will make sure I deliver for my party.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for giving us the opportunity to represent our people. I love the people of Port Loko and I know we will deliver for the SLPP. We will make things difficult for the APC in Port Loko District. The in-roads the SLPP has already made in Port Loko District are going to be consolidated in 2028 Presidential Election.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank my colleagues from Port Loko District. We fought a good fight and we are here to represent our people. I pray that God bless you for all the work you have done. You have served this country diligently. God bless us all  
*[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her kind sentiments.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, we know that Members of Parliament want to continue to contribute to the felicitations, but we have other business on the Floor. With your leave, I want to appeal that we summarise the debate. Parliament is a theater for debate. If you talk now, there will come a time when you will not have the appetite to talk.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Leader, I have already stated that the debate on this item would end at 4:00 p.m. and that is what will happen.

**HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. First of all I want to say congratulations to you, Mr Speaker and Deputy Speaker. I also want to thank the entire Leadership of Parliament. I want to say hearty congratulations for your re-election. I also want to thank all of you for a job well done in the Fifth Parliament, especially the way you controlled the affairs of Parliament. I know there were difficult times or challenging moments. I can recall that when there was an impasse or deadlock, you used to stand the House down for consultations. I am sure that was one of the qualities you exhibited as a good leader. I want to thank you very much for that; and with those consultations, we were able to enact many Bills, especially the controversial ones.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the things I will continue to remember you for was when we went to State House to discuss the Public Elections Bill. You made it clear that it would be difficult because of the Hung Parliament. You said certain aspects of the Bill would be difficult to pass through because we needed 2/3 majority and there was no way those aspects of the Bill would get 2/3 majority. I respected you for that and I am not surprised at all. Some of us were fortunate to follow you during those difficult times in West Africa. When the war broke out in Liberia and Sierra Leone, you were at the ECOWAS and you led the formation of ECOMOG. This was a very good step that was taken at that time. Whenever you mention the name Dr Abass Bundu in those days, it was a source of hope for the refugees and the displaced. When your name was mentioned on the radio, you see people trotting here and there in the capitals of West Africa, trying to bring peace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, looking at what you have gone through and the wealth of experience you have accumulated within ECOWAS, we are more than hopeful for more good things. You have handled difficult situations in this House. We want to thank you very much for that. Once again, I want to congratulate you and the Deputy Speaker for your re-election *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his very kind sentiments.

**HON. BINTU F. BOCKARIE:** I am Honourable Bintu Fatmata Bockarie from Bonthe District. I stand here as a Member of Parliament and a former Deputy National Women's Leader of the Ruling Party *[Applause]*. I bring you greetings from Bonthe District. I want to thank the Speaker for his brilliant speech he delivered to us. To the Leadership of this Parliament, we want to say thank you because if we are here today, it is because of your contribution and the advocacy you made on behalf of the women of this country. We thank you very much for that and we appreciate your efforts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we the women will make sure we work in the interest of this country and the Parliament as a whole. We the female Members of Parliament are new in the game of politics and that is why we want you to help us. We do not know anything about this Parliament. We will be knocking at the Speaker's door, so that we can be considered in almost everything *[Applause]*. We want the leadership of this Parliament to consider the women. You have to give us the opportunity to prove ourselves. I am emphasising on the women because I was the Deputy National Women's Leader of the Ruling Party *[Applause]*.

I have sympathy for the women and I believe in the women I am seeing here today. I am sure they will make it up *[Applause]*. I thank the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone for giving us this opportunity for us to be here today. It was not an easy task for all of us, especially the women. We thank the President and the entire membership of this Parliament. Thank you very much and may God bless us all *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to take this opportunity to thank the Honourable Member for her contribution.

**HON. IBRAHIM KABBA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Ibrahim Kabba from Western Rural. I want to first of all thank Honourable Members for voting for the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. I came very early this morning to hear what our Speaker will deliver to us. I am so proud of him because my mother hails from Port Loko District. I do not have any doubt in those from that district.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the people of Western Rural are here to congratulate you on your re-election as the Speaker of this Honourable House and the Deputy Speaker. When I was listening to your speech, I noted few things. Section 97 of the 1991 Constitution charges Members of Parliament to uphold and respect this Parliament. Therefore, I am asking each and every Member here to follow to respect that provision. The second thing is about time and we have to respect time. The third thing I noted is the attendance. The last Parliament was a hung Parliament which made it difficult to sail easily, but this Sixth Parliament is different. I want to assure every Member here that this Parliament will do better than the last Parliament. We are here to learn. I have served in the Council, but my experience there could be different from Parliament. I am happy to be in Parliament. I am pleading with the Speaker to ensure that his doors are opened to some of us because we have to get more experience. I thank you.

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

**HON. IBRAHIM KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Ibrahim Koroma from Gulama Mende Chiefdom, Kenema District. This Chiefdom shares border with Kono, Tonkolili and Bo Districts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and to also congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of this Parliament. We are new Members of Parliament and it means we are in the embryonic stage of this Parliament. We have learnt a lot from your speech. Your presentation captured your past activities; vis-à-vis, your challenges and successes. I believe this speech will guide us, especially Members of Parliament. I want to kindly and peacefully request here that you make the speech available to Members of Parliament, so that we can further peruse it for more comprehension. As I said, this speech will guide our performance. I thank you very much.

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

**HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Engineer Fallah Kenawah Tengbeh from Kailahun, Kissy Teng, Yenga. I want to start by thanking you for your brilliant acceptance speech delivered to us. I want to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House. I thank President Bio for providing us, especially new MPs, the opportunity to be mentored by the Speaker with the right acumen, penance and alacrity. He is indeed a master and an admirable figure in the Queen's Language or English Language. I admire you a lot, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Speaker, I want to assure this Honourable House that as an Engineer, I believe in teamwork. I am courteously certain that I will work with my colleague Members of Parliament to make good laws or participate in debates, with the view of maintaining the values this House has upheld in the past.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also thank the President for being genius and champion of female representation in Parliament. Female representation has increased ever than before in the history of our beloved country. To me, that is a very big achievement. Mr Speaker, whenever Bills come to this House that have to do with technicalities, I am kindly requesting that we treat them with the utmost importance. That is the only way Sierra Leone will move from where we are to the apogee of expectations. We need to focus on engineering and engineering principles. I thank you all [*Applause*].

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

**HON. FATMATA S. SOUKENAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my name is Mrs Pastor Fatmata Sarrah Soukenah from the Western Urban District. I know my colleagues would want to distract some of us, but we are learning. Mr Speaker, your submission was great and we also need your assistance to enable us perform exceptionally well. I want to thank you for your great work in this Parliament. Some of us are here today because of the role you and my colleagues who were in the Fifth Parliament played. I want to thank all those who made it possible for us to be here today, especially the women who were here. We need your guidance, support and



protection. This is because sometimes the men would want to bully us *[Laughter]*. However, we are not going to succumb at all. We are here to work or to do the needful because we want Sierra Leone to develop under the leadership of Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. I know with the prayers in our churches and mosques, we will be able to help our President to bring Sierra Leone to speed. I thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

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

**HON. AMARA M. KARGBO:** I am Honourable Amara Momoh Kargbo. Mr Speaker, please allow me to convey felicitations from the people of the Western Area. I have heard a lot about you with regard your achievements, especially in the field of academia and your administrative skills. Mr Speaker, your sense of humility is superb.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a result of time, my speech will serve as an ode to the great personality, being a Member of the great grand old political party is not a surprise. Your speech serves as a motivation to some of us. However, some people out there would have thought you were reading from a script which most people have written, but unable to fulfil, especially teaching them the wigs tragedies, dramas expectation and most importantly the unfulfilled expectations. Mr Speaker, seeing you this afternoon motivates most of us. I am sure having the opportunity to get a portion from your CV is a privilege and I feel fulfilled. I am not saying you are the best, but am yet to hear or see a better servant not only within Sierra Leone, but within the sub-region of West Africa *[Applause]*. I am yet to see or heard of a better servant compared to the great Dr Abass Chernor Bundu of the great grand political old party, the Sierra Leones peoples Party.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, once again I say congratulations to you and the Deputy Speaker on your re-election that you *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I feel deeply humbled and I thank you for your kind sentiments. I think the last speaker today is the Honourable gentleman in green.

**HON. TAMBA S. JOHNNY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. I am Honourable Tamba Simeon Jonny from Kono District. On behalf of my humble self and

the people of Kono, specifically Ngbaneh and Suma, we want to congratulate you and your Deputy for being re-elected to serve in those capacities. I was not surprised when you were reading your acceptance speech to the House. Your acceptance speech is a testament of what had been told that whosoever attends the great St Edwards will always deliver.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to state here that the 6<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> Speaker and the current Honourable Speaker were products of St Edwards Secondary School. His predecessor, Honourable S.B.B. Dumbuya is a product of St Edwards Secondary School. This is why in the last Parliament, some of the most difficult MPs from the other side, happened to be my colleagues. Whenever they prepared to disturb the proceedings they used to tell me, but I always try to pacify their anger. I even threatened that Dr Abass Chernor Bundu is a no nonsense man. He is a man who has presided over a turbulent election in Uganda. This is a man who has seen the head of a lion and he cannot be intimidated by the presence of a wounded dog *[Laughter]*. He is a man who has served as Legal Adviser to Mr Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. You think that character can be easily intimidated? So, I believe there should not have been any better individual to serve in that capacity rather than him. I want to thank him for this wonderful presentation and I believe those who are not here might be biting their fingers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as my colleague advised earlier, if you decide to circulate this particular speech, please ensure that those who are not here are also given copies. It should not be limited to us alone. Once again I want to thank you and also your deputy and the entire membership who voted for both of you overwhelmingly. God bless us all.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his kind words of felicitations. Honourable Members, this brings us to the end of Item V, which is Felicitations to the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. I am so deeply humbled by all of you for your very kind words and sentiments. All what you have said in acknowledgment of the achievements of the Fifth Parliament, let me acknowledge straight away that it was not

the product of one man's effort; it was not the product of Mr Speaker alone; all Members present today who were Members of the Fifth Parliament shared with me the accolades you have given to me [*Applause*].

Honourable Members, I personally want to thank Members of the Fifth Parliament who are again Members of this Sixth Parliament for the great work that we did together. We did it together and we survived together and we continue to work together. I think that brings the hallmark of everything that we worked together, consulting all the time. We went through very turbulent times, unquestionably so, but let me end by saying, let us not be too complacent in believing that the waters are necessarily going to be softer and smoother this time around. The ambiance within the Well might give that impression now, but wait I know the storm will blow over very soon and your colleagues on the other side will have to come and take their seats. It will be an act of unforgivable treachery if they fail to comply. They stood for election and got elected and they have been elected to represent their people and to participate in the proceedings of this House for the growth and betterment of our common heritage, Sierra Leone.

Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to extend an olive branch to our colleagues who are absent today to see reason to come to the House for no other reason, but on their own volition they stood for election and told their people to vote them to power. Having done that, for them now to turn around and not coming to represent their people will be an act of betrayal; and there can be no penalty that will suffice as a remedy to the people who have sacrificed through thick and thin to see them elected. I am convinced whatever the obstacle may be, it will blow over.

Honourable Members, I want to take your minds back to a little history because if we forget history, we are condemned to repeat history. Think of what happened in 2007 general election; fast forward, think again about what happened in 2012. I was part of it and some of you know. You were extremely annoyed when told to go to the police; but at the end we have to reconcile ourselves with prayers. We accepted the result unwillingly and allow the process to continue. This country is bigger than any political party. The country is over sixty years of independence and we should pride of the fact

that sixty years is not sixty days or months. Let us learn to resolve the differences between and amongst ourselves, and not relying entirely on the dictates that are melted by outsiders. Relying on outsiders is only half a solution; it is better to rely on ourselves and our own capacities.

Honourable Members, let us say thanks to the Government for having run the election entirely on the basis of the recourses of this country and from no other sources. This is a new beginning. We had of the notion of regime change is being reverberating all over the place. I am a lover of this and let me say this in this House, and forgive me if I offend any sensibility, but take your mind back to slavery. What did slavery achieve? It affected the human capital of Africa and West Africa in particular. I am sure you all agree with me that our human capital, which was the most important resource we had at that time, when able-bodied men and women were taken out of West Africa to go and work on the plantations in North America in the Americas for the benefit of other people.

Honourable Members, fast forward after slavery, religion came as a precursor for exploitation. They were the fore-runners of the colonialists. What did they do when the colonialists came? They focused on the natural resources and plundered them to go and develop their own industries and factories. Then we fought and acquired our independence in the 60s. Now, we are independent, but the doors were shut by the instrument of independence and they can no longer have access to the resources of our countries as they want. China is with us as a friend, the Unions are with us as a friends, the field is becoming more competitive and even the Russians are there. So, there is intense competition for our natural resources and some of them think they could access our natural resources by interfering with our domestic affairs; by interfering with our electoral processes and thereby determining who should govern our respective countries. That is the bottom line, Honourable Members and I want you to remember this. So, we must always be alert to strongly defend and protect our country from those whose only interest is not to come and promote our development, but quite rightly and indirectly their primary interest is their own development.

Honourable Members, our brothers and sisters may come when the storm would have subsided. They will come and join us and together we will put our shoulders to the wheel and move the development of this country forward. So, we should not get angry. We do not wish to run a One Party State; in fact the Constitution does not allow us even if we intended to do that. We hope they will see things that way and advise themselves. I am sure if this persists, they will be the greatest losers.

Honourable Members, once again, I end by thanking you more sincerely for your very warm felicitations to me and to my colleague Deputy Speaker. May God bless us all *[Applause]*. We are going to complete the rest of the items on the Order Paper. We are starting with item II, which is the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2023.

**HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, I advise that we keep the Record of Votes and Proceedings for the next adjourned date.

**THE SPEAKER:** They are not available? I want to see those who have not received their copies.

**HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, let us keep this item for the next adjourned date. Most MPs have not received their copies.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, are you suggesting or telling me?

**HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE:** I am suggesting sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** How many people are without the Votes and Proceedings? The Table Clerks will make copies available to those without the document. I would have loved to agree with you, but I think it is pretty straight forward. It is not controversial, but I think we can go through it very quickly. Let us do what is meant for today. So, can we go through quickly, Honourable Members? I thought a copy has been made available to those without copies. Please, let us browse through quickly. I start with Page 1. Do you have any corrections to make? Honourable Members, if your name is misspelt please do not hurry about it, but bring it quietly to the attention of the Table Clerks. Page? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11?

**HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA:** Mr Speaker, Page 10. What the Speaker did was to announce the leadership and it is better for us to change the word 'recognise' to 'announce.'

**THE SPEAKER:** Agreed?

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

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Speaker if we change 'recognition,' it would work interchangeably.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** I agree with you because you did not only announce, you also recognise them. Therefore, it should be 'announce and recognise.'

**THE SPEAKER:** I have no problems with that, Honourable Member. I have been advised that 'recognition' is the correct word to use, but in the light of S.O.[4], let us use both 'announce' and 'recognise.'

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Speaker, I think this is a House of Order and a House of procedures. We have to do things according to the procedures of this House. We have to go according to the Standing Orders. I advise that we stick to the Standing Orders. The Standing Orders says 'recognise.'

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to be guided here. I cannot see the word 'recognise.' I would like someone to browse through S.O [4] quickly. I have seen it now. It says 'Recognition of the Majority and Minority Leaders...' It is on Page 7. So, let us retain the word 'recognise.'

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I do not know what it is.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is in conformity with the S.O. [4].

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Noted sir.

**HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, on that faithful day, the Leader of Government Business also asked the Clerk to clarify things before the oath taking and those discussions are not captured here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, the Hansard will do that.

**HON.REBECCA Y. KAMARA:** Thank you sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any other comment or observation? If there is no comment or observation, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 as presented?

**HON. MUSTAPHA SELLU:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. NENNEH LEBBIE:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 has been adopted as presented]*

## **FORMATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE COMMISSION**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, pursuant to Section 93 of the Constitution Act No. 6 of 1991 and Section 2 of the Parliament Act 2023, I wish to announce the following names as constitute in the membership of the Parliamentary Service Commission.

1. Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Chairman
2. Deputy Speaker, Deputy Chairman
3. Majority Leader and Leader of Government business, Member
4. Minority Leader and Leader of the Opposition, Members
5. Chief Whip, Member
6. Opposition Whip, Member
7. President of the Female Caucus, Member
8. Chairman P.C MPs, Member
9. HON. Bashiru Silikie, Member

10. HON. Saa Emerson Lamina, Member
11. HON. Veronica K. Sesay, Member
12. HON. Quintin Salia Konneh, Member
13. HON. Emilia L. Tongi, Member

We shall have two more APC MPs to make a total of 15 as the composition of the Parliamentary Service Commission.

**HON. EDWARD GEORGE:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. SHIAKA M. SAMA:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Membership to the Parliamentary Service Commission has been approved]*

Announcement of the following

- a. Committee of selection S.O [71]
- b. Committee on appointment and the committee service

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, pursuant to Section 93 of the Constitution of 1991, Act No. 6 of 1991 and S.O.[17], I wish to announce the composition of the following standing Committees of Parliament

- a. Committee of Selection S.O71
- b. Committee on Appointments and Public Service

### **SELECTION COMMITTEE**

Right Honourable Dr Abass Chernor Bundu Speaker, Chairman  
Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Member  
Minority Leader and Leader of the Opposition, Member  
Deputy Speaker, Member  
Chief whip of the Party, Member  
Chairman P.C Members of Parliament, Member  
President female Caucus, Member



Whip Opposition Party, Member

Honourable Sahr Emerson Lamina, Member

Honourable Bashiru Silikie, Member

Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay, Member

Honourable Mohamed Bangura, Member

The Clerk of Parliament shall act as secretary to the Committee next the Supervisory Committee will consist of the following Members:

### **SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Chairman;

Minority Leader and Leader of the Opposition, Member;

Deputy Speaker, Member;

Chief Whip Governing Party, Member;

Whip of the Opposition party, Member;

Chairman P.C Members of Parliament, Member;

President Female Caucus, Member;

Honourable Mohamed Bangura, and all Honourable Members and the Clerk of Parliament shall act as secretary.

### **THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

Hon. Mathew S. Nyuma, Chairman

Hon. Bashiru Silikie, Member

Hon. Shar Emerson Lamina, Member

Hon. Neneh Lebbie, Member

Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, Member

Hon. P.C Shebureh, Member

We have three places for the APC Members of Parliament.

### **THE APPOINTMENTS AND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMITTEE**

Hon. Mathew S. Nyuma, Chairman

Hon. Bashiru Silikie, Member

Hon. Sengepoh Thomas, Member  
Hon. Sahr Emerson Lamina, Member  
Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay, Member  
Hon. Dickson Rogers, Member  
Hon. Rebecca Yei Kamara, Member  
Hon. Emilia Lulu Tongi, Member  
Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, Member  
Hon. P.C Foray Gondor, Member  
Hon. Francis A. Kaisamba, Member  
Hon. Mohamed Bangura, Member

We have five other places to be filled by the APC as Members.

**THE SPEAKER:** In the absence of the Chair the Deputy Leader of Government Business will act as Chair. Can someone please?

**HON. BASIRU SILIKIE:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. EMILIA L. TONGI:** I so second Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Membership to the various Committees as announced by the Honourable Speaker has been approved].*

### ***Announcement***

**TABLE CLERK:** Honourable Members are kindly encouraged to complete their registrations. Out of 96, only 75 Honourable Members that took the oath of office have completed the process. Members are also encouraged that an officer from NASSIT would be in Parliament next week to complete the NASSIT Registration process which will include taking photos for the NASSIT ID Cards. Both new and old Members are encouraged to register as the information of the Bio Data form is urgently needed by the Ministry of Finance.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, thank you very much. I must congratulate all of you, especially the new Members of Parliament for making it possible to start today's proceedings. I want us to maintain the good work and give the greatest respect to the time. If we start early, we will be able to go through quickly.

***Adjournment***

*[The House rose at 4:45 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.]*