

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

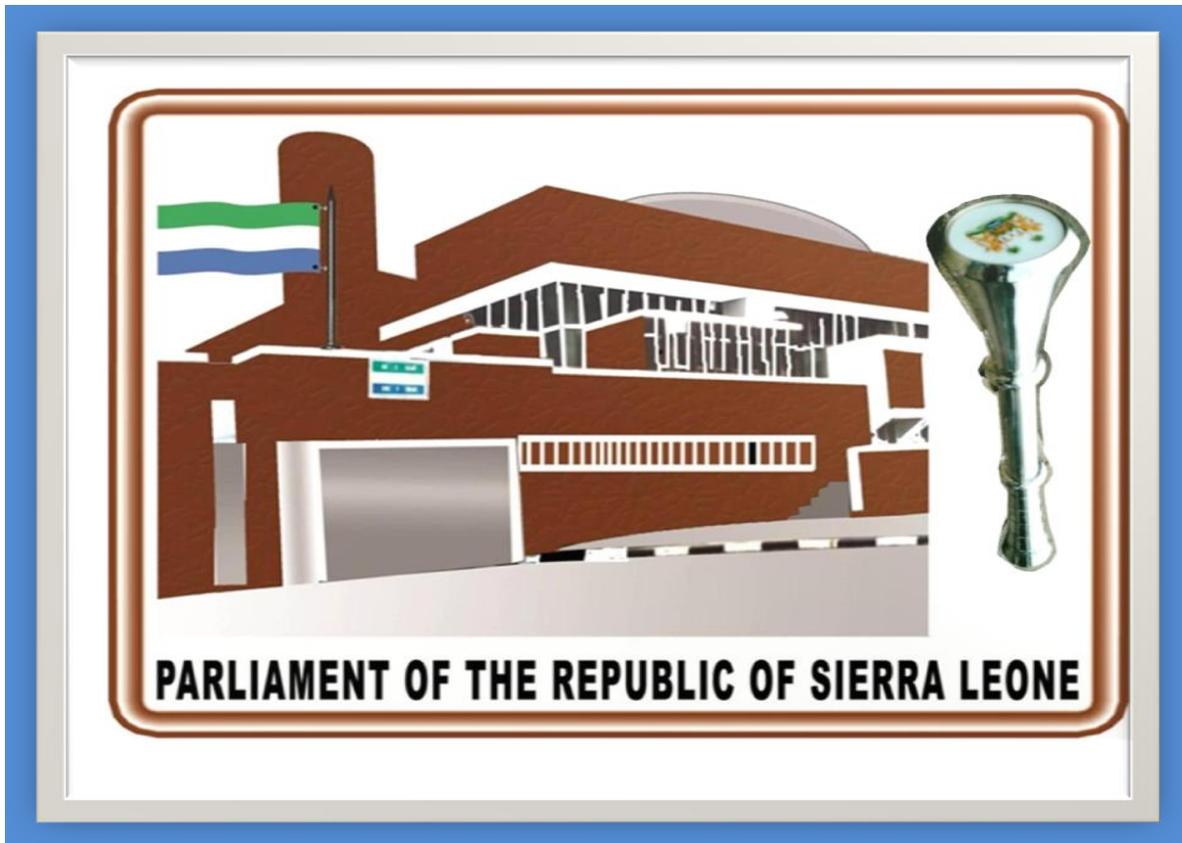
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION - FIRST MEETING**

**FRIDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> JUNE, 2018**

*SESSION – 2018/2019*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMANTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 12**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2018

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PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

BE IT RESOLVED:

“THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2018”

[FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY]



*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 FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> June, 2018.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

## **II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING, HELD ON THURSDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY, 2018.**

### **COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we now go through the record of the Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2018. I hope there is nothing controversial in it. We go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3?

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Mr Speaker, Page 3. According to what I have here, there is no Page 3. I have Page 2 and Page 4.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope the Clerk-At-The-Table is taking note. Page 3 has mysteriously disappeared from the Honourable Member's record. Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8?

**HON P.C SAHR YOUNGAI KONTANDAY MBRIWA II:** Mr Speaker, Page 8, No. 11. My name is Honourable P.C Sahr Youngai Kontanday Mbriwa II. The II is missing and the Mbriwa is in small letters.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope the clerks will take note of that. This is an important correction being made by the Honourable Paramount Chief. Do not forget to add the II. Page 9? Page 10?

**HON. DR NFA SORIE GBASSAY KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Page 9. The last contributor yesterday was Dr Nfa Sorie Gbassay Koroma, but it is not stated here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you are referring to No. 30, under Roman X, after No. 29? It means we should add No. 30. Thank you, Honourable Member. Page 10?

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, Page 7.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you are taking us back.

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Sorry about that sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, what is your comment?

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, I am not Moses, but Musa. I am sorry for taking you back. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Which number, Honourable Member?

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** No. 4, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Your observation is noted. Shall we proceed then? We were on the last page. If there is no further correction or observation, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2018 as amended?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2018 has been adopted as amended]*

### **III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT JULIUS MAADA BIO**

**PROPOSER:** HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

**SECONDER:** HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

#### **BE IT RESOLVED:**

THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 10<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2018.

[FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY]

**THE SPEAKER:** I have received lists of intending speakers, which I am about to proceed with. In that case, I would recognise Honourable Kemokoh Conteh.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of colleagues in this Well to something that is very unsavoury for us as parliamentarians. This is a non-partisan issue because it is about Parliament. Yesterday, the Speaker who was presiding did warn members at the gallery from taking or recording events that are taking place in Parliament. Today, we realised that somebody sent on Social Media what he/she recorded and it has gone viral. As we speak, our friends in the United States are sending those clips to us. In as much as we are doing everything here for the public, we should also caution people who are misusing information they are getting from Parliament to bring down Members of Parliament. I want to state here that what was done was ill-intended. The Member of Parliament who was involved came back after lunch to make his presentation, which was very brilliant, but nobody recorded that *[Applause]*.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we are saying here is that we are all humans and people ought to understand that parliamentarians are not super humans. This means we can also make mistakes. Sometimes it happens and the Speaker did make it clear that some people in certain circumstances might not be able to deliver when they are being interrupted. This was exactly what happened. It must be accepted that it was not done in bad faith among parliamentarians. We know that undertones are acceptable and we want to warn people to stop using these things to castigate or demean Members of Parliament or Parliament as an institution. We do not want that to continue and we want people to be mindful of this. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I have just been briefed quietly by the Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business about what transpired here yesterday. May I enquire whether you have seen in the gallery the person who was responsible for yesterday's incident?

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I cannot say who did it, but it is very clear that the recording came from somebody who was within the Well of Parliament and it was aired on F.M 98.1. We are not blaming the radio station for doing what they did. We will engage them quietly and discuss issues with them at a very professional level. What we are saying is that let people do not make it a habit to record plenary proceedings. They do not have the right to disseminate information that is not supposed to be disseminated. That is what we are saying.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I cannot agree more with that statement and let it be stated and understood very clearly that apart from the media representatives who are accredited to this House, no person is entitled to record or video the proceedings of this House, especially when it is being done for malicious reasons. Let this be the last time and we shall be addressing this particular matter. If it is repeated, then I would be compelled to take certain unpleasant decisions that would affect members of the public. We do not wish to do that at any time because we know this Parliament is answerable to the public and we certainly solicit your participation in the proceedings of this House.

Honourable Members, let us all observe a certain level of decorum, both on our part in this Well and those in the gallery. I hope I will not have cause to repeat this. You are perfectly entitled to come and listen to the debates, but you do so with civility and within the rules and procedures of this House. If you violate the rules, there are penalties that would be meted on defaulters. I would not want to find myself carrying out those penalties. Therefore, do not give me the cause. This is the last warning and I hope it is going to be heeded.

On that note, Honourable Members, we proceed. I now call on Honourable Kemokoh Conteh to take the Floor.

**HON. KEMOKOH CONTEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the people of Constituency 108 in Waterloo, I have perused and digested the Speech delivered by His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. I found it very impressive and very sensitive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my contribution will focus on the National Youth Policy of 2014, which spells out the definition of youth very clearly. According to the National Youth Policy of 2014, a 'youth' is somebody between 15 to 35 years. This category of our people constitutes **34%** of our population. Looking at this category, there is a diversification in school and out of school. We also have employed and unemployed, educated and uneducated, physically and mentally challenged youth.

Against this backdrop, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, underemployment and unemployment is a perennial issue and it is very sensitive. If you look at the Speech delivered by His Excellency the President, I agree with Paragraph 78, where the President stated that 'Sierra Leone's population is mostly youthful-youth; i.e., persons between 15 and 35 years. In this particular statement, His Excellency's Speech is talking about the Youth Commission. The Youth Commission is a functional programme that is ongoing. It was established by an Act of Parliament in 2009, which geared towards capacitating the youth of this country. But let me make it categorically clear that the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, has made significant progress in empowering the youth. I want to emphatically state to this noble House that the 'New Direction' should follow the direction of the APC, if they want to succeed, especially in empowerment of the youth. If they follow that, it would be good for this country and it would contribute to the development of the youth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to the Waterloo or Koya, you will find the Obasanjo Centre, which is meant to captivate and capacitate the youth of this country. Today, they are of a difference. If you go to the Limkokwing University, you will realise that it is a standard university established during the reign of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. That particular university has already created a dividend for brains. This is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and we are looking at the technological ability to capacitate the youth.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make it categorically clear and with no iota of doubt that His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Baada Bio is presently at Benguma Barracks in my constituency, attending a passing out of capable officers who are being recommended by the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, to be recruited

into the army. Today, he has taken the bold step to commission those dynamic people. However, once a soldier is always a soldier and Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is a genuine Brigadier and he is disciplined. Within the rank and file of the Military, I want to believe there is discipline. If you cannot conform to those orders, definitely you are not going to continue operating within the rank and file of the Military. I want to remind this House that the Military under the late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba of blessed memory has been uplifted. Today, our gallant men and women of this Republic are participating in international operations.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I do not like raising my voice the way I have just done. But let me refer you to S.O 32[9]. I want you to be a little more civil with your language.

**HON. KEMOKOH CONTEH:** Noted, Mr Speaker. Let me go back to youth issues. Today, the youth form about **34%** of our population and we want to ensure that we take a different drive. In as much as we are in a post-election situation, there are enormous challenges facing the youth sector. I want to look at the deviance of anti-social activities of the youth. Today, there are lots of negativities against the youth, especially during electioneering process. Electioneering period is usually the period when people take advantage to humiliate and intimidate others. We do not want such to continue. We want to create an avenue that is suitable and comfortable for the investors to be accommodated. We want to create an avenue for a suitable and sustainable democracy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for far too long the youth have been creating an avenue of difference, but if you look at the anti-social activities in the country, there are enormous challenges and we want to look at it with seriousness. In order to contain this appalling situation, the Minister of Youth Affairs has a role to play. There is a functioning Commission established by an Act of Parliament in 2009, which entails valuable aspect. If you look at Part 3, Section 10 of the Act, it tells you the availability of resources and the utilisation of those resources. That will enable the youth to be useful and viable in society. Without much ado, the former President played pivotal role

in the establishment of the Youth Commission and we have made a lot of progress in that direction. Therefore, the New Direction should continue to put resources into that Commission for us to transform the youth of this country. We want to take them to another level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of the youth are in this House and we want to see a very unique situation like what Dr Ernest Bai Koroma did during his tenure. He actually ensured inclusive governance. He appointed youth as ambassadors, legislators, judges, executive directors, etc. That is what we call inclusive governance. We want the 'New Direction' to take a page from the former President's book. I want to state here that the 'New Direction' cannot function properly without tapping into the legacies of the APC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now go to sports. We have a mini stadium at Kakua Chiefdom. The youth in that particular area are enjoying a nice recreational facility. We have approved a Police Academy to develop the professionalism of the police force. We want to see a unique and dynamic police force, not the police that will come into the Well of Parliament and ask parliamentarians out of the Well. We want to make sure that you follow the legacy of the APC led government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is in this particular document that was delivered by His Excellency the President is an intention. The people of this country have seen our performance. Therefore, I believe action supersedes intention.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are going to take a close look at the intentions of our President and see how best he could accomplish what is stated in this document. At this juncture, I rest my case. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to Honourable Sahr E. Juana.

**HON. SAHR E. JUANA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to differ a bit from the business as usual by saying thanks to His Excellency the President. I want to take a different approach. This Parliament nicked name somebody as the firebrand, the Sierra

Leone's most calculative speaker S.O 2 'Bɔbɔ fɔ en Mɔt.' This name was given to the late Honourable Musa Tamba Sam. In his place, we now have Honourable Sahr Egbinda Juana, an Honourable comrade from the most disputed Yenga in Kissi Teng Chiefdom, the proposed farmland for the APC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot of people may begin to wonder why I said proposed farmland of the APC. The APC thought Kissi Teng was their farmland, but when I came with a popular crusade, I ended their existence and this is the beginning of a new era. The APC is no more in Kissi Teng Chiefdom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am here with a very fine message from the people of Kissi Teng. The APC failed because they lied to the people of Kissi Teng. They told us they would free Yenga, but Yenga is still in trouble. I campaigned vigorously that under the 'New Direction' agenda, I will liberate Yenga. I am sure His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio would make it a point of duty to liberate Yenga from the Guinean grip. The Yenga issue will be a thing of the past.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, while I admonish my colleagues, I must be very sincere to myself and the people of this country. The APC are of the view that achieving free education is a difficult task and I want to buy that idea. I wish the Honourable Minister of Primary and Secondary Education is here to listen. It is very true that it has its own challenges. This is because if you have listened to the various contributions made by Members of Parliament, you would agree with me that some sentences, patterns and structures needed corrections. In other words, most of the Members who made presentations here need some adult literacy. Therefore, if for any reason the APC in 90 days was able to provide electricity in Freetown, though at the extreme expense of the people of this country, why is it that the well planned, well scheduled and well analysed free education cannot succeed when it had academic philanthropists and deliverers in charge?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is obvious to note that one thing this country inherited was not only limited to bad governance, but cruelty and barbaric attitudes which have blanketed the lives of the people of Sierra Leone. They are very pleased to

be there today for what you sow is what you reap. Few months ago, for someone to access a flag bearer or a running mate was a thing of a sacrificial alarm. Today, we have naturally disrobed them and they are now accessible. Indiscipline when it comes to context, the APC gets worried. There is an adage that says, 'when dry bones are mentioned, the old man or woman gets worried. Indiscipline was the order of the day and orders from above are examples of indiscipline. These were meted and this country faced what we call a society characterised by violence. Indiscipline is not only limited to physical violence, but what we saw in Parliament was perpetuated by some lawless men and women who were chased out. We thank the no nonsense clerk, who instructed the police to ask them out.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the economic situation in this country is worrying.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]:** Mr Speaker, I have spent the whole week admonishing Members of this House to guide their speeches even when they are out of this jurisdiction. The Honourable Member has just referred to his colleagues as lawless men and women. You have even referred the Honourable Member earlier to S.O 32[9]. I thought he would have read that section in the Standing Orders before making his contribution. He should not use such words on Honourable Members of Parliament. I do not just want it to be expunged from the records, but I demand that he apologises to this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you have heard the Point of Order. Do you have any response? I would also draw your attention to S.O 32[8], not just S.O 32[9].

**HON. SAHR E. JUANA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am gratified by the caution given to me by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, but I am referring to men and women who did the act before they became Members of Parliament. For the sake of sanity and peace, and for the sake of the 'New Direction,' I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

**THE SEPAKER:** Well done, Honourable Member, you may now proceed.

**HON. SAHR E. JUANA:** As I stated earlier, lawlessness is not only limited to physical violence, but it is also inculcated in the fact that the financial mismanagement that overran this country for eleven years is also an indiscipline act. I want to imagine that if Kamaraimba and Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella were heads of state today, I know for heaven's sake, that whoever would have taken the mantle of authority in this country, would have definitely addressed the issue of lawlessness by bringing the perpetrators of financial mismanagement to book in order to stop indiscipline in this country. I know the 'New Direction' has a scope and we will leave no stone unturned. Definitely, we will pursue it to the letter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to come again to the Yenga issue. The outgoing government left a very bad legacy. For instance, it was their reign in 1991 that Koindu was used as a passage by the rebels. We all know that Koindu used to be the gateway for economic boom. My people were destabilised and killed. The legacies of the APC are known to be havoc and horror. In 2014 and 2015, the man-made Ebola manifested again in Koindu. This is social abuse and injustice against my people. However, Koindu is now liberated and the APC will no longer pinch its political tent there. I am the bona fide owner of Kissi Teng Chiefdom. The APC era is over and I implore the new administration to investigate the activities and atrocities committed not only by the outgone government, but the division brought into this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know people are surprised with what I have said. Some will even say the Honourable Member is speaking with venom. When I turn and look around and see the red, when I see the sun and when I see the blue uniform, I become jittery and worried. A decent citizen like myself was hunted and chased by the red sun as if I was not a citizen of this country. This was done because I wanted to represent my people and they also thought I have come to make a change. Well, a change has come and the APC will never have a foot on that soil.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, the disputed Yenga is still an issue. I did not see much of that being mentioned by His Excellency the President, especially border security. Our borders are very porous and that is why Sierra Leone is at risk, not

only by means of external aggression, but also the outbreak of epidemic, such as the man made Ebola.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me conclude with water. The water and sanitation aspect in my area has been treated with levity. Kissi Kingdom has never been given the attention it needed. They usually say it is their constituency. I do not know how that was translated in the Bible or the Quran. This is indiscipline and injustice to a level that they would even take human beings as theirs, when they do not know their background. Water and sanitation is a recipe for the outbreak of cholera, Ebola, etc. Kissidom was completely abandoned. It was only during elections we usually see them parading with chiefs and money in 'Ghana must go bag.' I told my people to eat the money, but they should vote for the SLPP. This is what exactly happened [*Laughter from the ruling Bench*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Water Resources is not only a technocrat, but somebody who hails from that part of the country for the first time. Mr Minister, I know what you are capable of doing; and with you in charge, the water issue in Kissi Teng is a settled problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude by thanking myself for not only listening to the Speech delivered by His Excellency the President, but perusing it. This is why I am standing here with authority to talk about this document. I call this document the road map to development. I want to congratulate the President for a job well done. All of us should join hands in ensuring that the recommendations in this document are implemented so that the children yet unborn will not ask us difficult questions. I am sure posterity is judging our colleagues and this is why nature has permanently placed them to where they belong. It was sad and unfortunate and this is the first time in the history of Sierra Leone to have a majority party in Parliament, but yet sitting on the left. God has shown you that what you sow is what you will reap. Therefore, they have to be there permanently, whilst we forge ahead to make this country a better place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to now call on my colleagues on the left to join us in making this country a celebrated country. I thank you and appreciate you. God bless us all [*Applause*].

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member of Constituency 002 for his contribution to this important debate. Before I call on the next speaker, I want to draw the attention of this House to the fundamental roles of Members of Parliament and to pin point exactly where we have reached. There are three fundamentals involve. The power to make laws for the Republic of Sierra Leone is vested in this House under Section 105 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. In fact, it is one of those few sections where the word 'supreme' is used; i.e., supreme legislative authority is vested in this House under Section 105. That is a very important role that you carry as Honourable Members. The second important role you carry is your representational role, representing your constituents as Members of Parliament and the people of this country. Again, I would refer you to Section 97 of the national Constitution. We are not immediately concerned with those two provisions, but we are concerned with the third equally important role that Members of Parliament carry; i.e., your oversight role. That contains, among others, in Section 93 of the Constitution.

Honourable Members, I want to specifically draw the attention of this House to S.O 38[3]. Today is the fifth day of the five allotted days for this debate. I know the provision to that S.O has been dormant in the past years. I would want us to consider seriously giving it some life, starting from this Parliament. I am very pleased in that connection to observe that we have just been given a document by the Honourable Minister of Political and Public Affairs, indicating the number of ministers who would like to respond to the many concerns you have raised in the course of this debate over the past four days. In the past, I am told that particular S.O was never invoked. Under my leadership in this Parliament S.O 38[3] is going to be given new life and it lays the beginning of your oversight role. I say this equally to Members of this House, right across the aisle. You bear a special responsibility to yourselves, your constituents and this nation, to hold the Executive accountable and answerable. The promises made by

His Excellency the President in this Address we are debating encapsulate the grand design of his vision; but below that the ministries carry the responsibility of translating that segment of the ground design into reality, the ground vision that is allocated to their work in their ministries. And this is the beginning of the oversight role of Parliament. And I want to state here that in carrying out your oversight roles, one of the things that I would like to see, which I would discuss with the Minister of Finance, is the fact that I would not want to see oversight Committees having to depend for the execution of their roles on hand-outs from MDAs. There should be special recognition of this role by the Ministry of Finance because it would help the Ministry of Finance. It would help His Excellency the President and it would help the Government to ensure that there is full accountability to this nation and to this Parliament.

Therefore, Honourable Members, the ministers would be called to respond to the many concerns or observations you have made. I would invite you to be ready with your pens and papers to note down the promises they are going to make to you as to how they are going to translate them into reality; the ground vision encapsulated in the Address delivered to us by His Excellency the President, on the 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. It is very important that you discharge that role faithfully and conscientiously. I now forewarn you to prepare because this is the beginning of your oversight role when the ministers take the Floor at the end of this debate. With that, I want to recognise the Honourable Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella to now take the Floor.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA** [*Leader of the National Grand Coalition*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I join you in commending the President, His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for his detailed presentation to this House. His vision for our country was very detailed and clear. His vision was very ambitious as it is supposed to be giving the amount of challenges that he has inherited. I want to take this opportunity to emphasise the sense of urgency that he has presented in this vision document. The problems we face are huge. He cited several indicators from global multilateral institutions, from the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] to the Africa Union Agenda 2063 to show how low our performance in all of those indicators has

been over the last two decades. I emphasise the last two decades because some of the problems our country face are not just as a result of what happened over the last ten years. Some of them are structural problems that have bedevilled this nation for several decades. I hasten to say that about **85%** of this noble House is new. In other words, **85%** of us have not been in this House for the last 30 years. Therefore, we have not been responsible for the laws and legislations passed in this House. We should, therefore, not feel obligated to defend what is wrong. We should not be too partisan at all. Apart from me, **30%** of us here are below 40 years. So, you the longer folks in this House on this side, and that is why you should not be too partisan. It is about your future. Development is an incremental process, which means it takes time to deliver public goods.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about electricity. I want to state here that the APC cannot claim Bumbuna because the Bumbuna Project started when I was still in primary school. So, it is cumulative and it takes time. Everybody contributed to it, but it is the same with bad policy. Bad Policy takes time to accumulate. Sometimes the effect of bad policy is felt ten or twenty years down the road. This is why I join the Honourable Speaker in admonishing us all about our role in Section 107 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Thank you for bringing it up Sir.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if our group begins to condone the bad practices of the past by not enacting good laws or we rush to approve agreements in this House and fail to perform our oversight responsibilities, we would be equally responsible. I commend His Excellency the President for the New Direction agenda. I agreed with him that S.O [2], 'PAOPA Salone for betɛ.' In that respect, I also want to say he cannot do it alone. He needs us to deliver and at this point, I want to quote Nelson Mandela, former President of South Africa. With your permission Sir, I read so that I can get the quotation right. **"Poverty is not an accident like slavery and apartheid, it is man-made and can be removed by the actions of human beings."** But no single person can liberate a country. You can only liberate a country if you act collectively. Therefore, our collective collaboration counts a lot. Our collective collaboration, both as

SLPP and Opposition Members means that we have to say the truth. It may be inconvenient, but we would have to do it. It also means that we have to be constructive, in order to help the Government achieve its New Direction agenda.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now go straight to some of the sectors. I hasten to say that the NGC party has decided to submit a formal document to His Excellency the President and to the SLPP. We have a team that is working on everything he has said here to give clear contributions as to how we think we can all deliver in the spirit of a constructive opposition.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to education. If you look at Paragraphs 52 to 66, you will agree with me that the President devoted more time to education. So, this is his flagship programme and we want him to succeed. I have listened to many contributions from the teachers, the right Honourable Member from Portee, my colleagues from Kambia and many other teachers. They have given us the details. I would not spend too much time on primary education, but I hasten to say free education exists, but it can be scaled up. It started since the Presidency of Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba and continues throughout the Presidency of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. However, the difference now is that His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is more ambitious and he has to be. He is much younger than me and like the young generation here, he believes he can deliver more and that is what we expect from him. The ambition is big, but it has to be planned well. I join all those who have talked about proper planning. Let us bring the blueprint here, so that we can follow. The numbers are huge and it is not child's play. Approximately, **42%** of our population is below eighteen, which is about 2.9 to 3 million people. There is a huge demand for education. You need better schools and quality teachers. If we do not do it right, it is going to be a problem.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Lumley told me yesterday that the Government has already got **\$14mln**. I am happy for that and would join you to find more money if necessary, but that is not enough. That amount is a drop in the bucket. We must ensure that the free education programme is made

sustainable over time. It means there must be trade off. We have to sacrifice some sectors some to make sure that education works. We must get education right.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would spend more time on tertiary education because that sector has not been exhausted by colleagues. We need better universities. You all know that I spent three years now doing lectures across this country; i.e., Freetown, Makeni, Kenema and Bo. The universities are calling for our help and many of them are in an advance stage of decay. Students are not on campus. those of us who have been privileged to be at Njala University in the brighter days of Njala, we used to grow our own food in some cases. We used to eat sausage we made here on Sundays. We need to restore the prestige and excellence in tertiary education. Yes, everybody deserves basic education, but when you want innovation or technology, it is in the tertiary education. Again, I commend His Excellency the President for bringing back one of our best scientists, Mr David Sengeh to make him the Chief Innovation Officer. I met this young man when he graduated two years ago at Massachusetts Institute of Technology [MIT], where I was key note speaker in a conference on Energy, It was one of the most prestigious conferences. I met him before entering into the conference and I celebrated him. He is leaving a lucrative job at International Business Machines [IBM] to come here to serve. In that regard, I want the President to continue bringing the best and the brightest brains to help Sierra Leone's development. Tertiary education needs attention. Apart from the physical infrastructure, we have been hearing a lot of scandals. So, I agree we need excellence. We have been hearing about examination scandals and financial impropriety. Students pay too much money for registration. We can do it online without paying. Students also complain about sexually transmitted grades in secondary schools and also in the universities. I want to admonish my colleague from Kissi Teng that discipline must go across the board, including the way we manage our universities and the responsibility of our educators.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will give you some statistics. The Speaker admonished all of us that if you quote a figure, you better give the source. As you are planning for education, I want to refer colleagues to some useful documents that they

can refer to in the process of trying to ensure that they plan properly. This is a study conducted by the World Bank and it was an intensive study on higher education. The title of the document is 'The Republic of Sierra Leone Higher Education and Tertiary Education Sector Policy Note of July 2013.' It is the most detailed study on tertiary education. The growth rate of enrolment into tertiary education from 2005 to 2013 was **11%**. If this trend continues, enrolment into tertiary education would quadruple by 2025. The NGC party advocated for this splitting for us to have two ministries and in inclusive nature of the President, he took some of our ideas. They need to work together because if you solve the problem in primary and secondary schools, but fail to do same for the universities, you would end up sending the problems to the universities. So, I stop here on higher education. We have talked a lot about primary education, but higher education needs attention too.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now go to the Economy. It is known that I have described the Economy of this country and I am not ashamed to say it here. I have described some of the practices over the last ten years as 'rankanomics.' I pray that they are not repeated because I hear some saying S.O 2 'APC bin do dis so we sef dae do am.' Yes, I agree with the Honourable Speaker when he spoke about our oversight role. We will play our oversight role to ensure that you do not copy the wrongs that happened, but in fact you scale up what is good. The Honourable Timbo was right yesterday and my office is located in his Constituency. He said there were good legislations passed here, including the Treasury Single Account that was passed here. So, let us do not throw the baby with the birth water. We should scale up what is good and radically change what is not good.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Festus Lansana also gave us a good economics lecture. He demonstrated very eloquently areas that were wrong. We should be ready to accept that there was too much discretionary powers. We should be ready to accept and rent taking. Contracts were awarded to people who could not perform because of partisanship. It is true that contracts were bloated. The Auditor General's Report has several of them. The Auditor General cited some of those contracts that

were bloated and I used them during my campaign. In some cases, they were three or four times the actual value of the contract. Leakages in the economy do not only occur among the MDAs. One of the worst areas is procurement, but we have to play our oversight role. I am told by colleagues that hopefully, I would be on the Public Accounts Committee [PAC]. I pray that I have the opportunity to serve in the PAC because we want to pay attention to the Auditor General's Report.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now look at the Economy. The President emphasised on diversification and he is on the right track. We have to diversify this Economy. He chose the right sectors: i.e., agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. The emphasis has to be on value addition. We cannot be commodity producers alone. I do not want to be over ambitious, but we can also produce iron rods. I believe if we move fast on value addition in agriculture, we can produce some finished products we can export overseas. I would encourage all and sundry to also look at agricultural commercialisation. The President is correct and some of us should be farmers. I have already started my own farm in my Constituency 062 and my ranch as well, but we also have to produce horticultural products. We have several airlines in this country. They go back with empty cargo space. We should look at the possibility of exporting vegetables and flowers for European and America markets. When I was in Vienna, we used to consume fresh okra from Kenya, brought in by cargo every morning. We have that opportunity and I know the European Union [EU] and others are willing to support us. So emphasis on agricultural commercialisation, production of higher value horticultural products, including vegetables and flowers would be available.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we spend about **\$10mIn** to import onions in this country. In fact, some of the hotels have to get onions from Guinea. Well, we are trying to make sure that Lungi and of course my Constituency 062, would start producing onions to sell to this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to fisheries. I fully agreed with the President because fisheries can change our lives. When I was a minister here maybe, twenty-two years ago, a diplomat once told me thus, **"You always talk about your diamonds,**

**but your real diamond is your sea because it is replenishable.”** The President is right when he said surveillance must be reinforced. People fish here, but they take the fish to neighbouring countries, package and ship it to the EU Markets and they make more money than us. He has just told us that we lose over **\$15mln** a year in the fisheries. It has high potential and we can do two ‘nacani,’ as they do in Ghana and Cote d’voire. I have visited those factories and we can also package our own shrimps, as they do in Senegal. These are all value addition we must embark on. I had a discussion with the President and I have promised him that I would work with his Foreign Affairs Minister and others to ensure that we gain access to the EU Market. It is wrong that we do not have market access to the EU for over a decade, yet people porch here and still ship our products to the same markets. So, we need to work together in order to transform our fishery sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our colleagues from Bonthe like to talk about tourism. Your future is in tuna fishing and canny. You are ten miles from the best tuna grounds in this country. Samu is about 15 miles away, and Freetown is too far. So, between Samu and Bonthe, we can employ more people in this country and create more foreign exchange. I want to help to see how I can work with the Minister of Fisheries to see how we can be able to gain market access in European Markets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to review what is happening in the export processing zones. It was a good initiative by the APC led government. We helped to have some of those exports processing zones established, but we do not know what the factories are doing. Are they producing for export or they are just transhipping here? We do not know, but it was a very good initiative and that is where we need to attract more foreign investments. We have to lower the cost of doing business, because it is too expensive to borrow here. I have been to the bank recently, trying to borrow some money to undertake a construction project. We cannot continue to borrow at **22%** to **25%** interest rate. I am trying to do a big farm in Samu, but I cannot borrow at **20%** to **25%** to go into a risky area like agriculture. We need an agricultural bank with concessional rate. The President told me about his own farm. So, there is going to be

good competition over time for all of us. This will enable us to go and visit different farms, as Sir Milton Margai and others used to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move quickly to governance, which the President spoke about in Paragraph 28. I commend him for saying thus, **“My Government will treat corruption, not only as a governance issue, but also as a national security threat.”** He is right because corruption is a clear and present danger to this Nation. We are losing more money to corruption than we get as aid. The money we are losing cannot go into the schools, Medicare and infrastructure. So, we must fight corruption and I am sure we will all enlist in the President’s army to fight the war on corruption. However, just by coincidence, the Speaker cited Section 107 of the 1991 Constitution. I was going to do same. We will be part of the corruption if we do not play our role. On the 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2017 certain Bills were rushed into this Parliament, including the Mining Bill. I have asked whether it was an emergency Bill. They said no, but why the rush? I am sure Mr Speaker would never tolerate such to happen.

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member, but it is within the prerogative of this House to review some of those agreements.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, you will find a willing partner in doing that. It is not that we are against whoever proposed those Bills, it is simply not in the interest of the future generation. The minerals of this country belong to our children and our grandchildren. We must take care of the future generation. There are many of us here who are ready to make sure that corruption is brought to barest minimum. I now remind the ministers, if they are here, that we will track whether they are implementing the Auditor General’s recommendations. According to the Auditor General, less than **20%** of her recommendations are implemented by MDAs. If we have the resources from the Ministry of Finance, we will play our oversight role.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the rule of law, promoting justice and human rights, which the President mentioned. He cited this in Paragraphs 134 to 138. **“In this vein, we caution that we should not replace supreme executive authority and orders from the above by executive orders.”** As I said, we are

NGC and we want to be fair. We should not replace supreme executive authority and orders from the above with executive orders. It was good for the first few weeks, but we believe we should follow due processes now to get proper formulation of orders or laws in this country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Again, I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member of Parliament, but he raised the question and answered it at the same time. Executive orders came into being before the Government came into being. Now that the Government is in being, I do not see any room for executive orders anymore.

**HON. DR. KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, your point is well noted. I like the emphasis His Excellency the President has placed on reforming the Judiciary. I want to say this here that my father joined this Parliament in 1957. I watched his career as a very powerful politician and chief in this country. He had the courage to speak truth to power because there was a Judiciary that would protect him. There were Attorney Generals in this country that would refuse an order from a President if they felt it was predatory. I told the President that we hope the Judiciary would not be used in a predatory manner to go after political opponents. He already stated it in Paragraph 136 that the Judiciary would be independent and he would try to build public confidence. **"Its independence and impartiality and make justice accessible and available for all."** We would support him to do that, so that we can genuinely support and do our oversight responsibilities well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move to the issue of dual citizenship. Our brothers and sisters in the diaspora sent more money here when the Ebola virus disease struck this Nation to support the fight against the disease. You know that some of us had been victims. We have even been told we were not born here. We were going to be denied our citizenship. It is wrong, but we will join the Government to review that clause. Already, we have informal discussions with the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of Government Business and we would collaborate on a good Bill to finally amend those parts of our Constitution that refused our people to give their knowledge and expertise to this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I look at Energy. We are seeing figures flying, but the Honourable Member from Koinadugu gave correct figures about the installed capacity of power generation in this country, which is over 150 megawatts. However, the President was right when he said that we sometimes get less than 100 megawatts. So, it is not just about the installed capacity; it is also what we deliver. It is inefficient and there are lots of transmission losses. We need to do a lot more.

**HON. OSMAN WURIE JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, I can identify the person. He is standing right at the back on this side. I just saw him taking photos. I have just observed you taking pictures of this Well.

**THE SPEAKER:** The person who has been identified please come forward. Is the Sergeant at Arms present? Order! Order! Order! Shall we continue with the debates? He is in very good hands.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are ready to give detailed contribution to support His Excellency the President. We assured him that the Energy Committee, when it is finally constituted, would provide more supports. I just want to say we have to diversify Energy sources. We have to look at Energy projects. I heard that the Mayor was going to close 'Bomeh.' Some of us are excited because we want to see if we could bring technical expertise to see whether in fact we can use those wastes to generate power. But Energy is a serious issue. The lesson we have learnt cannot enable us to fix the Energy problem now because it is a long term process. It takes three to five years to be able to design one solid mega project. So, let us not throw the baby with the birth water. There are lots of good things the APC did in the Energy sector, but there are also lots of wastages. Already, we inherited a solid road map that has been costed with support from the Millennium Challenge Cooperation [MCC] the new Minister can implement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Paramount Chief from Kambia District made the point yesterday about sustainability. All of these are good things, but we are one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of Climate. His Excellency the President has documented it. Everything we do, including infrastructure, would be

wiped out if we do not climate proof what we do. This is why I support his ban on timber logging. I have been to Kabala, Tonko Limba and other places and I discovered that the trees are gone. Our agricultural base is being killed. They were shipping out four thousand containers of timber every quarter out of this country. This is a country with the worse deforestation rate. Therefore, sustainability is important. I want to state here that the Environmental Protection Agency [EPA] should not be an appendage to the Ministry of Lands. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. Before I call on the next speaker, I wish to draw the attention of this House to a very valid point made by the previous speaker and to remind all of us that Bills can come to this House, not only from the Government side. This is sometimes over looked by ordinary Members of Parliament. You tend to rely far too heavily on the Government to always bring initiatives and Bills to this Parliament. Bills can also come from you, as ordinary Members of Parliament; under Private Member Bill. Let us make a difference much as we are going to transform the character of this Parliament from the handmade or rubberstamp Parliament to a more effective, efficient and forward looking Parliament. Bear in mind that you have a role to play in that direction as well. So, for anything that has happened in the last few years that you feel strongly about, you are at liberty to come to this House with a Private Member Bill. I just wanted to sound that note of possibility. I now recognise the Honourable Hassan Sesay.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here again to go through a procedure that we have been observing over the years, which is a Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President for a speech well delivered in this Well of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are all aware of the fact that when we receive documents in this House, they are rich in rhetoric, neatly crafted, but I want to preface my intervention with a quote from the former National Security Adviser to President Carter Zbigniew Brzezinski. He said: **"Ideas that cannot be transformed into reality would always remain an ideological abstraction."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to remind the President that we want to see him succeed. The previous speaker has just summarised the debate here. He did address issues which are pertinent to our development. This is to remind the President that we in this House are prepared to make sure he succeeds because if he succeeds, Sierra Leone succeeds and when Sierra Leone succeeds, all of us will be elevated. That is what we are looking forward to. It is not about parties or whatever. Everybody has been talking about this document we are debating. So much has been said and a lot of what has been said is very good for the development of this country. Nobody can deny that, but let us be aware that the same public servants who worked with the former President and the former Government are the same public servants who are going to work with this President. Let us understand that the problem is not with the politicians, but with the public sector. I am not indicting them, but what we need to do, as first step, is to re-examine our public sector and see how we can modify it to meet with our current needs. All these beautiful ideas can come from these ministers or technocrats. If we continue with the same institutions that were created in the immediate post-colonial era to transform a new nation, we will continue to go round the circle. I want us to think about this very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of Energy, the previous speaker just made it clear that something was done, but a lot needed to be done. There were attempts made by the previous Government; i.e., the SLPP Government to bring Energy to this country. We knew about those attempts. We had the Moroccan debacle and the South African fiasco. Those were attempts made to rectify our Energy problem, but they got to nowhere. We agreed that mistakes were made in trying to bring Energy, but at least Energy was brought to this country. Where we had an improved source of Energy, we need to work progressively to ensure that we improve what was good. Like the former speaker said, what is good, we will continue to improve on it and what is bad, we overhaul it. We are prepared to do that because we know that in governance, mistakes are bound to happen and we have the ability to correct those mistakes and move forward. That makes governance process a continuous one *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on the attention of the President to certain things. We do not want statements said in this House to be contradictory. We do not want the President to start contradicting himself at this early period. This is happening because the people in the Public Service are not briefing him properly. I will quote from this very Speech. We sat in this Well and we listened attentively to the President who said: **I am going to depoliticise the National Tele-Communication Commission [NATCOM].**" He said that in this Well. If you were not listening, please read that document again. The President did say he was going to depoliticise NATCOM. By saying that, the President actually meant that he was going to remove every investiture of political influence from NATCOM. If the President had said that in this Well, we know very well that he is a man who will always live by what he says. Shortly, after that Speech, the President nominated no one else but the Chairman of the Sierra Leone People's Party, Dr Prince Alex Harding as Chairman of NATCOM. That was why I prefaced my intervention with the quote from Brzezinski, which says, 'words, if not translated into reality, will remain an ideological abstraction.' We do not want him to be caught in the web.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the previous Government appointed Mr Momoh Conteh as Chairman of NATCOM. He was the Chairman of NATCOM and later made a district chairman of our party. Of course, we agreed that it was an error; and if we have agreed that it was an error, we are expecting the current President to correct that anomaly. He should not have appointed the National Chairman of the SLPP as Chairman of NATCOM. We do not want the President to contradict what he has said to us in this House. We want him to uphold the principles that he espoused here. He has to start on a very good footing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not being political here; I am only pointing or referring to something the President himself said in our hearings. It is not politics at all. This is the only way we can help him because we know he is less than two months in office. In this same Parliament, the President did tell us that between April and May 10<sup>th</sup> his government has generated **Le300bln**. Kudos to the SLPP Government for doing

that, but I also want to remind him that during that period, we did not have a Cabinet in place. There were no ministers in place and no new institutions were created. We credited the institutions and the mechanisms that generated that money. We created them and we should be given the credit. You have to give credit where credit is due. I am sure no new institution has been created to generate that money. It is the mechanism he inherited from the past Government that generated that money. Let us accept it. It is only when we approach politics from a very objective perspective that will make a difference. I will say it again and I want to challenge my colleagues on the other side to dispute what I have just said that the mechanisms that we created and left generated that amount of money the President quoted here *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should understand that in 2017, we generated **Le3.3tn** through the National Revenue Authority [NRA]. The facts and figures are there for you to crosscheck. I am not talking from a vacuum. I am saying things that happened and not those that will happen. Mr Speaker, I like to use this quotation. It says, **“let us remember yesterday, today was tomorrow, and today will be yesterday.”** Colleagues, if you want to know, that is very philosophical. There are fine gentlemen and women the President has appointed as ministers. A lot of them are very good.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I like your quotation. You have just reminded me of my grandfather’s old adage. That God made only three days; i.e., yesterday, today and tomorrow *[Applause]*.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Did you hear that, Honourable Members? Like I said, there are fine gentlemen and women who have been appointed as ministers. We have the Engineer seated in front us, Dr Tengbeh. He was a very good friend of mine from college and there tremendous respect between us. We know ourselves very much. I can walk to his office and push his door and nobody will stop me. That is the kind of democracy we want to practice where we will always feel comfortable with each other. We want to say the truth and we want him to succeed. We also deserve to be given credit where credit is due.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President also spoke about transparency in the mineral industry. I want to assure him that the man who is heading the National Minerals Agency [NMA] is one of the most reliable people you can ever deal with. I will tell the reason. Institution saved this country hundreds of millions of Leones. How? I do that on evidence-based information. What happened? The National Minerals Agency had a rented property along Wilkinson Road. They realised that they are paying too much for rent. What did they do? They moved to a Government-owned building and rehabilitated it with less than a quarter of what they used to pay annually on rent. What is that doing? This is saving this Government much earned resources. The man is a man who is very professional and when you deal with him, this is exactly where we are. These are the kind of things we want as a Nation. I think they deserve credit and we should give credit where credit is due. We want to call the attention of the President to his pronouncement made here. The President said he was going to depoliticise NATCOM. I implore him to depoliticise NATCOM. We should not have somebody from a political angle to man some of these institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Leaders would have to take the Floor; and because of that, I would humbly give the Floor to the leaders of this House. Before that, let me observe that I am seeing a Member of the Cabinet here who has not been coming here because S.O. [2] 'di pa get for tok today and the mammy sef dey ya.' We welcome the 'mammy' here. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. My next Speaker is an Honourable Member who will now rise to contribute to the debate in his capacity as a Member of Parliament. Yesterday, he deputised in my absence in the capacity of Deputy Speaker. I now give him the Floor.

**HON. SOLOMON SEGEPOH THOMAS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I listened carefully to what my colleague on the other side was trying to say, I was a little bit confused as to what he actually meant or what he wanted us to understand. Honourable Hassan Sesay was trying to tell this House that the APC led government created the institutions that are now generating the revenue. In the first place, let me

set the records straight that the very institutions he was talking about were not created by the APC. They were created by the SLPP during the tenure of the late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a writer once said: **“When anything is happening in Society, let somebody say it before he or she dies, so that when things go wrong, somebody will get up somewhere and say that person said it but they did not listen or the society or the nation or the community did not listen.”**

There is only one thing that will last and that thing is the truth. No matter what we do as politicians, no matter what we say, it is only the truth that will last. We are all maybe Christians or Muslims. I am a Christian and I believe in God through Jesus Christ. Muslims do not need to believe my God. One thing is clear that there is always an ultimate reality. When people even take their oath or when people even refuse to take their oath, you are affirmed. That is to say, there is an ultimate reality. There is a trend about politics in this Nation that we are yet to understand. Our friends on the other side are refusing to understand the trend. In the 60s or early 70s, political opponents were locked up and a one party dictatorship was declared and nothing was found wrong with that. Those days by the mere sight of military personnel, or a policeman or ISU as we used to call them, will send our people from the provinces running or taking to their heels.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the electioneering process, for most of the time most people were never interested in politics. When it came to political matters or electioneering processes, most people took to their heels. Are we refusing to notice something that is happening in this Republic? The mere fact that 85% of Members of Parliament are new is not perchance. It is happening because our people are beginning to realise what the responsibilities of politicians towards them are. Our people are beginning to better appreciate the fact that as long as you are elected to this House, you are supposed to serve them and serve them well. I am not worried about the APC being in majority in this House [*Undertone*]. We all know exactly what happened. As a Member of Parliament I will refuse to even comment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my contribution has nothing to do with criticising the APC. All what I want to say is the truth. I do not find myself standing here on this first day of June in the year of our Lord, two thousand and eighteen, to tell the whole Nation that the 'Free Health Care' was wrong. That is not what I want to say. I cannot stand here to tell the whole Nation that constructing roads was wrong. That is not what I wish to say. There are certain policies that were very beautiful. All what I want to say is the fact that these policies were misdirected *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stood in this Well and I constantly spoke about the Wilkinson Road. It was good to have extended it and was good roads were constructed. All what we are saying is that the construction of roads in this country and the prices attached to these roads were inordinate. That is all I wanted to say and this is what I wanted you to accept as citizens of this Nation *[Applause]*. It is ironical for Sierra Leone to be one of the poorest nations. We are constructing the most expensive roads. This Nation has been declared as one of the poorest Nations, yet we are constructing very expensive roads. The roads we are constructing are extremely expensive as compared to other roads in developed nations. This Nation deserves very good deeds. We deserve very good deals. Where standard international roads cost probably **\$2mln**, we expected our Government to negotiate for even less than **\$1mln** per Kilometre. We have seen figures like **\$3mln** to **\$4mln** per Kilometre. I think we have to be realistic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Free Health Care was a beautiful idea, but the question is, did the Free Health Care succeed? We are saying this because we want our people to hear. We were all elected by our people to come and serve them. We were not elected by our people to come and serve political parties in this House *[Applause]*. We must have the capacity to do what is right; we must have the capacity to do what is beautiful; and we must do what is right for the development of this Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members? I have not seen or noticed something that I consider more intriguing than the criticism levied against this current Government in respect of electricity. Throughout our stay here, from 2012 to 2017, each time His Excellency the Ex-President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma came to this House, he always

claimed that they have brought sustainable Energy. Only at the end of the day they tend to heap that kind of blame on a two-month old Government. If you spent the resources of this Nation for ten years to bring Energy, but in less than two months, you want to criticise a Government that has come into power less than two months, is that realistic?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said before, it is only one thing that will last and nothing else; i.e., the truth. In the circumstances, I wish to refer you to Page 1 of the Address. I want you all to join me to dissect some of the issues raised by His Excellency the President and tell this House whether he was saying the truth or not. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I read the second paragraph. It says: **"I am making this Address against the backdrop of the worst economic situation that this country has faced since Independence and characterised by double digits inflation."** I think we have double digit inflation in this country. We also have low domestic revenue mobilisation; true or false? We also have high domestic debt burden. If you read the rest of the paragraphs, you will realise that these are facts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without much ado, I want to assure you and to also allay your fears that the 'New Direction' is here and the 'New Direction' is here to stay and to work for the people of this country. Somebody was saying that come 2023, they will retake State House. I was saying to myself it is too early. Out of five years, the 'New Direction' has just spent two months and you are here talking about coming back to power in 2023. I was saying do not worry, you will get use to that. You will get use to SLPP in Governance.

*Suspension of Standing Order 5[2] being 12:00 noon*

**HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS:** By the time the 'New Direction' starts going to the eleventh year, you will certainly get used to it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am here to proffer suggestions. His Excellency the President spoke about Agriculture in Paragraphs 5 to 10. He admonished politicians to go into Agriculture. This is my suggestion, Honourable Members. I suggest that His

Excellency the President start by engaging Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament want to farm. We want to farm and we are serious about it. I crave his indulgence to encourage us in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I am so passionate about civic education. It will interest you to note that most educated people, graduates for that matter, do not even understand basic national issues. Somebody will go to the University and graduate and that person cannot even recite the National Pledge of this country. I know a graduate with a master degree who does not even know the difference between the Executive, the Legislature or Parliament and the Judiciary. That person does not even know what Members of Parliament are elected to do. So, we have a lot of functionally illiterate Sierra Leoneans. Sometimes people refer to illiteracy when it comes to people that did not go to school. Sometimes even educated people are functionally illiterate on current affairs. Under civic education, we can begin to teach things like tolerance or issues bordering on corruption and the responsibility of citizens towards their nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the last Parliament, I said that institution like Attitudinal Change Secretariat was not needed. It was complete waste of money. Do we need to have a whole institution to teach people how to change their attitude? The answer is no. All what we needed was to implement the laws. If they tell you not to use this route, implement the laws and attitudes will be changed automatically.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will round up with the Ministry of Social Welfare. We do not want to see the number of beggars we have on the streets. We do not want to see homeless children in the streets. I do not want to waste the time of this House. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I think we have reached a very convenient point when we should start winding up the debate in good time for all the good Muslims to pay obedience to our maker. That includes me of course. On that note, I give the Floor to the Leader of the Opposition. I know he does not want me to say 'Leader of the Opposition.'

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]:** Mr Speaker, I will appreciate it if you add 'majority' before Opposition. It is a fact and we cannot run away from the fact. In fact, I want to inform you that the letters I am receiving these days are so inconsistent. They will address me as Majority Leader, Minority Leader, and Leader of the Opposition. I am yet to confirm my nomenclature.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do not worry, they will soon get used to it. Let them keep listening to the Speaker.

**HON. CHERNOR R M BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]:** After adding majority before the word 'Opposition?' Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I take this opportunity to thank you very much for this opportunity and to also thank Honourable Members of this House. It has been a very fruitful week. I am sure, not just for us as Members of Parliament, but for the public at large. The ministers and other government officials who have been witnessing this debate have also learnt a lot. There have been a lot of political talks, but also issues had come out and those issues will be of use to the President for the coming year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] for five years. Therefore, I am sure it will be good for me to start with the PAC and Transparency and Accountability with regards to the President's Address. I would like to refer you to Page 33, Paragraph 28 of the President's Address. With your permission, the President, among other things, mentioned that he would review the relevant provisions in the Constitution of Sierra Leone, including Section 119. That has to do with the Office of the Auditor-General. It was said by the Honourable Member from Magburaka that those advising the President in the Public Service have also in the past contributed to some of these problems we are facing, even though most of the problems have been attributed to us politicians.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Auditor-General is a staff of Parliament and not the Staff of the Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC]. The Office of Auditor-General exists

because there is a Public Accounts Committee and there is a Parliament. Investigations for the ACC are done by their own investigating officers. If the queries raised by the Auditor General are taken straight to the ACC, then we do not need to have a Public Accounts Committee in this House. And having a Public Account Committee is a must because the funds the Auditor-General will look into at the end of the Year are funds that have been allocated to the various MDAs after the budget. So, the Auditor-General will continue to be an officer of this Parliament, working in close collaboration with the Public Accounts Committee. So, I hope those who offered that advice will go back and advise themselves accordingly. They have to make sure that they brief the President properly *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the last ten years, we achieved a lot as far as Transparency and Accountability issues are concerned. Some Members of Parliament spoke about improving the Anti-Corruption Act, which was a mere lame duck before 2008. The Office of the Auditor General was also very dormant before 2007. If we are talking about the Audit Report today, it was because Government paid keen attention and supported the Office of the Auditor General. Before 2007, we hardly hear about Audit Reports. And if they were released, they were thinner than the President's Speech. Today, we have gone beyond mere financial auditing. We conducted real time audit on funds that were spent on Ebola. In the midst of a war on Ebola, there was general call for investigation and that happened for the first time in the history of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. Today, we serve as an example right through the Commonwealth. Parliament of Sierra Leone and the Public Accounts Committee is providing expertise to other countries, like Nepal, Bangladesh and the likes to ensure that we teach them the best practice we used in achieving the objectives. These are good things we must continue doing. If we fail to accept what is good, there is no way we will achieve things that are good or build on them. They will be trashed and the tax-payers money would have been wasted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the environment. Again, I refer colleagues to Page 31, Paragraph 120. I will just read the first two or three lines. Mr Speaker, this

statement seems contradictory. With your permission it reads: **“Sierra Leone is presently ranked at the bottom of the environmental performance index, 163 out of 163 countries in 2010.”** The emphasis is on the use of the word, ‘presently.’ Presently cannot be 2010, Mr Speaker *[Applause]* and 2010 can, in no way, be ‘presently.’ Mr Speaker, I have a document with me which confirmed the ranking under the Environmental Performance Index 2018 and Sierra Leone is ranked 155 out of 180 countries. So, I am imploring those who provided this information to the President to revisit their records *[Applause]*. I do not need to waste time on gender.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think we are dealing with two different sources.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I agree that we are dealing with two different sources, but 2010 cannot be ‘presently.’

**THE SPEAKER:** There is a present continuous.

**HON. CHERNOR R M BAH:** That is it, present continuous and not present. There is a distinction between the two. I know you are an expert in the English Language, but present continuous cannot be present.

**THE SPEAKER:** You may proceed, Honourable Member.

**HON. CHERNOR R M BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not spend too much time on gender because both sides of the aisle have endeavoured to talk lengthily on gender issues. However, the facts are clear and the writings are on the walls that whatever President Bio and his government would do, will just be an improvement on what President Koroma and team achieved during the last ten years. The writings are on the walls for us to see. It is rather unfortunate that two women have just been replaced at the EPA and the NRA. They have been replaced by men. I like women and that is why I always support women *[Undertone]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Economy. Well, the language has changed from austerity to fiscal discipline. However, I do not see the difference. It is just language. President Bio is using fiscal discipline whilst President Koroma used

austerity. So, where is the distinction? This means the economy is not as bad as it has been painted. We were just been disciplined because we just came out of the Ebola scourge, which all of us know. I wonder where that English is coming from, but definitely it is coming from that side of the aisle and not on this side. Mr Speaker, we are disciplined people and whatever we do is based on discipline.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about our public debt. I am sure you must have read the late Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba's Handing Over Notes, where he confirmed that he was leaving this country with a debt of **\$1.6bln**. I am sure you read it. I am also sure you remembered that the Paris Club had to waive our debts for us to be able to use our domestic funds in ensuring that we move the Economy to where it was supposed to be, otherwise this country would have crashed. These are facts and we should not run away from the truth. I agree with the Deputy Speaker who spoke very well. It is rather unfortunate that the last two days he had been a referee and today he is a player. I never did that for five years. I hope we would rethink that the 'New Direction' should not take us to the opposite side, which is negative.

**THE SPEAKER:** But that should not...

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Sorry, Mr Speaker, but that was not meant for your ears. Mr Speaker, up to the time we left Government, we have always respected the people's will. The donors or international partners had confidence in our Government. They continued to do business with us. If we were unable to service our loans, they would have stopped doing business with us like they did in 2007 [*Applause*]. They however continued doing business with us. In the banking system, for instance, if you are credit-worthy, it does not matter what you come for, they will give it to you. The countries we admire today have more debts than us. If you are credible, they will continue doing business with you; but the most important thing is that, we are not under a high risk and that is where we left the Economy. We hope you will not take us to a higher risk level [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will encourage new Members of Parliament to go through the budget statements and Presidential Addresses for the last twenty, thirty or

more years. You will see that the language has always been the same. So, I will not waste time on that at all. We know that Rome was not built in a day. We expect you to follow the good things we have done. You have to develop and improve on them, so that the people of this country will benefit from your own leadership as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank the Honourable Member from Samu who spoke about the TSA. I hope we will not run away from the truth. If you read the Address, we were told on the 12<sup>th</sup> May that **Le300bln** had been collected. I hope we will also be told same on the 11<sup>th</sup> June because that has been the pattern on what you have collected [*Applause*]. We are looking forward to seeing the economic boom. We are definitely looking forward to that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to tourism. I refer this House to Paragraph 17, Page 5. With your leave, Mr Speaker, Paragraph 17, the last sentence says: **“Unfavourable country image.”** I want to dwell on those three words. We cannot develop tourism if the country’s image is unfavourable. The way and manner the ‘New Direction’ is painting the image of this country would not assist in developing tourism in this country. S.O. [2], ‘how u sel u fish, na so den go buy am.’ So, I encourage all of us as Sierra Leoneans to be good ambassadors. We have to be sending good messages out there. We should be ambassadors of Sierra Leone. We should not be talking about things we know they are not true just because we want to score political points. They will not help us as a Nation. How can we develop tourism when we keep talking and in some cases, even supporting violence? We need peace and security for tourism to thrive. We know what happened recently in Lumley and the gentleman is going to be buried today. I do not want to talk about the Mayor’s incident or things that happened immediately the election results were announced. Let us brand our country positively Honourable Members.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I think you have actually underscored three words; i.e., unfavourable country image.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Would not you agree that those words may have been written against the backdrop of the 11 year civil war, the Ebola scourge and the mudslide?

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** It is possible, Mr Speaker. It is and I am coming to those areas.

**THE SPEAKER:** All of those issues did not paint the country well overseas.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** It is on that note I said those images should be used for our benefits. In South Africa, they had the Apartheid and in Rwanda, the genocide, but those countries have become tourist attraction centres. They have stopped using statement that will destroy the image of those countries.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, I am rising on S.O 34.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Honourable Member, you do not have my permission.

**THE SPEAKER:** Proceed.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I totally agree with you and it is on that note I encourage the new Minister of Tourism to use those opportunities to develop the tourist industry. I know she is a very strong woman and she can do more for this country. Like what is happening in Rwanda, South Africa and other places, the war museum is still in Rwanda. It is bringing a lot of revenue for the people of Rwanda. Let us replicate that here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I agree with all Honourable Members who have called for a review of the 2009 Mines and Minerals Act. I agree with them that the Act was done because we had to replace a Decree which was passed in 1996. Of course, there are gaps in that Act we must look into. Like what the Speaker said, whilst we urge the Ministry of Mines to review that Act, I urge Members of Parliament to start looking at the Act itself and comparing it to countries where mining is practiced, like Botswana. I want my brothers and sisters from Kono to know that mining is not just about Kono, but mining is taking place in other parts of the country as well. We are also mining rutile, iron ore and diamonds in other parts of this country. Let us all collaborate in

ensuring that what has happened in the 1930s will not continue. It has started in the 1930s and we are not just talking about the last ten or twenty years under the late President Kabbah or President Koroma. These issues have been there since 1930s. We also know that OCTEA is now called Koidu Holdings and they came into this country in the 1990s. They had lots of issues and we had to put pressure on them to review their Agreement. We had to because they had very long time Agreement which started with the Executive Outcomes. I do not need to go back to that history because as the Speaker said, some of those issues are better dealt with in some other quarters. Sierra Rutile Company was also a company that signed an Agreement before 2007. Some of these things, as we have said earlier, are continuous. Let us collectively look at them and see where we can make a difference.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the health sector. The Honourable Member from Bonthe was here in the last Parliament. I am sure the Hansard are still around you commended the efforts being made. I am sure what we are supposed to do is to put more efforts into the free healthcare initiative. It was a good initiative as the Deputy Speaker said. We should not keep saying negative things about it because that will not help any Member of Parliament. We should look at the gaps and try to correct those gaps *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about ambulances today because President Koroma's Government bought ambulances for this country *[Applause]*. My brother from Segbwema, I want to inform you that the Nixon Hospital had been there for eleven years since 1996 and nobody did anything for that hospital. It was President Koroma who did something *[Applause]*. I am sure for those of you who are moving around Freetown and in some provincial headquarter towns, the construction of hospitals are visible. They are visible and have increased the training of medical personnel. The teaching hospitals have been created for the first time in the history of this country. Fortunately, the Leader of Government Business was part of those who moved and ensured that those Bills were passed into law here. A lot had been done in

the health sector and we are encouraging President Bio to improve and build upon those things that have been done in the health sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot had been said about education and nobody will challenge the importance of education. No individual in his/her right sense will challenge the relevance and value of education. What we on this side are going to do is to support you to succeed because when you succeed, we would have succeeded. We are here today because we are educated and we are ready to support you. The Honourable Member from Kono spoke about education. Well, a university is going to be constructed in Kono and we have already secured the funds before handing over power. The funds have been secured and the documents are there. I am sure you know about it. It is not a pipeline project. The SLPP is good at saying 'pipeline projects.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to national cohesion, which the President talked about on Page 33, Paragraphs 123 to 126. In Roman Number II, the President said amongst other things that he would fully implement the National Youth Service Scheme, where young people from one part of the country would be cross-posted to other parts for their national youth service. That will be a very good move, but I want to encourage Members of Parliament to inspire our constituents to go beyond this move. Sierra Leoneans should be able to move and reside in any part of this country without fear. There are lots of Northerners in the South-East, but very few South-Easterners in the North. We have to move across to other places. If this should succeed, we have to do this for our youth. We have to make sure that we coexist and we cohabit. Most of the people from the South-East to the North are traders or miners. A lot of intermarriages have taken place. My wife is from the East, Kenema to be specific. Honourable Sidi Tunis' wife is from Portloko. So, we encourage others to do same... - *[Interruption]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you are a fine epitome of that.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have been a nationalist and I want to encourage all of us to follow that path. It will be useful for the development of this country. National cohesion is something we must pay attention to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Agriculture. A lot has been said about agriculture. As I said, we have not heard anything new as far as diversification of the Economy is concerned. We hope and pray that what we have done over the last ten years is scaled up. Tormabom is a dream and it has been a dream since the reign of President Kabbah of blessed memory. It has been a dream and we have to work harder in order to actualise the Tormabom dream. If my brother from Samu can be of use, we are going to grab you by the neck, but we need to actualise Tormabom. Successive Presidents have talked about Tormabom and this is not the first time.

**THE SPEAKER:** Swamp too.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Many more, Mr Speaker, but Tormabom has been the music and we want people to dance to that music. There are lots of ABCs around and the President has called on politicians to go into Agriculture. I do not know, but some of us have farms and for those without farms, they should join the bandwagon, so that we utilise the ABCs. They are lying there idle. You will agree with me that the ABCs are idle. They have been constructed, but we are not utilising them. Those who are complaining about Agriculture are ones who are not supporting Agriculture. We should stop criticising and be part of the development process.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not need to talk about water. When I came this morning, I saw Honourable Suahilo M. Koroma. I do not know whether he is still around, but he will agree with me that what we left is far better than what we met in 2007 *[Applause]*. In Pujehun, Kenema and Bo, we have improved the water system in those three areas. I was in Kenema quite recently and I saw what we have done there. We also have water projects in Mile 91, Lungi and Lunsar. We have running water in Kailahun. Honourable Gevao, we will talk about your hospital after today, but we will encourage President Bio to do what late President Kabbah was not able to do for your constituency *[Laughter]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I support those who spoke about disability issues. The Act was passed, but little was done in that regard. As a Parliament, let us put

hands on deck and work with the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Commission in ensuring that disability issues are addressed properly this time round.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Paramount Chiefs have spoken and I do not need to talk about you. However, I am sure you will agree with me that President Koroma left you in a better position than you were in 2007. I call on President Bio to improve on where President Koroma left. Your arrears, I am sure, will be paid. I am sure by the 11<sup>th</sup> of June, 2018 your arrears will be paid.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to remind this House that our Military is our pride. We should work towards supporting a professional military. We should do the things that will earn them the respect they deserve. Operation 'pebble' is nothing to write home about. For those of you who do not know what operation 'pebble' is, they are structures that were constructed by the British for our soldiers, using mud blocks. I want to thank former President Koroma for constructing modern barracks for our soldiers *[Applause]*. Fortunately, President Bio is a former military man and I am sure he knew before now how the military was. Today, he knows the state of our military, where they reside and the logistics they are using. I am sure he will pay more attention to the Military. Again, I call on him to pay special attention to the Military.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not need to talk about transport because even the President himself acknowledged the strides made as far as the Lungi International Airport is concerned. However, we still need to do some cosmetic works on the runways. I do not need to waste time on that. If you go to the Queen Elizabeth the II Quay, you will see tangible work being done. The pictures of our Airport before 2007 were sold on the streets of Freetown. Today, even the blind are seeing beautiful pictures of our Airport. I wonder why some of our colleagues are still refusing to see the reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo has left, but he spoke about ICT yesterday. I had wanted to say he said nothing on the Speech because maybe he had nothing to say. For the records, I want to remind the Leader of Government Business that we have fewer mobile operators, but the quality and

penetration is far better than what we inherited in 2007 *[Applause]*. The quality and penetration is what is relevant. Having fifty garbage operators is nothing, but having two capable operators is what we need in Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. Quality is better than quantity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Ministry of Lands. I want to support the President when he spoke about creating a Land Bank on Pages 30 and 31 in order to ensure availability and affordability. I cannot agree with him more Mr Speaker. We are talking about Agriculture, but we will continue to see these challenges if we do not create land banks. Our land tenure system is driving away investors and we should not shy away from the fact. If government create land banks and soils are well tested, I am sure attraction to the agricultural industry would be realised. I want to support this and to encourage the Minister of Lands to work on this within this session, so that by the time we debate the next Speech of the President, this could be a plus in the President's Address. If he fails, I will be disappointed.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, you have to be even briefer now *[Laughter]*.

**HON. CHERNOR R M BAH:** Mr Speaker, I am trying to apply the 'Chernor Model.' We have been told that the roads are expensive by non-engineers in any case, with the exception of the roads we have signed, including the Bo/Mattru Road. We have signed the contract already. We are also looking forward to having new contracts for new roads that will be cheaper than those we have awarded *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I encourage my colleagues on the other side to accept the fact that the people of this country have voted President Bio and his party into office to serve this Nation and the APC as majority in this Parliament. Mr Speaker, 68 out of 132 is 52. I do not want to use the word 'default' because that would open another Pandora box. I do not want to go into all that and that was why I tried very hard to deliberately avoid it. Mr Deputy Speaker, that is true and we have accepted it in good faith. The people who sent the 68 of us here have asked us to say all what we have said in the last five days. We have not been talking for ourselves; we have been talking on their behalf. We have the right to defend the President's Address because he

is been elected by them to be President. We are also under duty and obligation to speak for them because they have elected us to be in the majority in this House and we are representing them for the next five year *[Applause]*. Mr Leader of Government Business, I hope I am correct to say tomorrow is a cleaning day. I want to remind myself because I have been cleaning on a daily basis. I want to make sure that I intensify the cleaning exercise tomorrow in my neighbourhood. I will invite you to come and see how it will be organised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I need another 15 minutes, but unfortunately today is Friday. I want to confirm that this side will continue to support the President in his dream to succeed. In doing that, whatever we see that is not right will be condemned and proffer solutions or alternatives. That is why we are here. We have the right to critique, but we will not just criticise. We will proffer solutions or alternatives. That is why when we talk about violence being perpetrated, people should not take it as a personal attack. We are talking about Sierra Leone and whatever wrong thing that has been done, we have the duty and we owe the people a duty to ensure that we communicate and communicate loud and clear. That is exactly what we are doing *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in supporting the President's bid to succeed, I want to support his dreams and I have no doubt that the Leader of Government Business will join me in approving His Excellency's dream. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Honourable Member for his wonderful contribution to the debate. I cannot, but help observe the orchestrated move by Members on my left *[Laughter]*. The spontaneity with which it happened cannot go unobserved. Well done, Honourable Members *[Applause]*. I will now give the Floor to the Leader of Government Business *[Applause]*

**HON. SIDI M. TUNIS *[Leader of Government Business]*:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking all Members of Parliament who contributed to this Motion. Generally, it has been a very good debate. It has been very constructive, even for those who did not want to support the President Bio's Address decided to go back to

Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's Speech. However, they still supported this one. Before I proceed, I would like to make some comments on what the leaders have just spoken. I do not actually have much to say because there are no controversies, but I want to make some clarifications.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure the Honourable Kandeh Kolloh Yumkella that this Government will work with him to ensure that we gain access to the European Market. Honourable Hassan A. Sesay spoke about NATCOM. It is very true that His Excellency the President promised to depoliticise NATCOM, but by saying so he was actually not talking about appointments. He was talking about 'Orders from Above' that the APC led government used. NATCOM is a very important institution; and as such, the President was trying to talk about the operations of that institution. That was exactly what the President was talking about and not appointments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the Leader of the Opposition that indeed, the Paris Club waived our debts during the SLPP era and the APC could not benefit from that because of poor management of our Economy *[Applause]*. That is the only reason. I also want to state categorically clear that the mobile penetration he was talking about is actually part of the requirements as laid down in the NATCOM Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will react to few issues raised by Honourable Members on the other side. I will start with Leader of the Opposition. He spoke about the PAC. His Excellency was right when he said: **"In particular, my administration will review the relevant provisions of the Constitution of Sierra Leone 1991, including Section 119 in particular and the ACC Act to strengthen the ACC's investigative and prosecutorial mandate with respect to Audit Reports tabled by Audit Service Sierra Leone before Parliament to give it powers to proceed without the need to wait for Parliamentary investigations."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in my opinion, His Excellency is only trying to protect the Anti-Corruption Commission with regards to S.O 75. The Audit Service reports are almost always online when they are tabled before Parliament and once it has been laid before Parliament, it becomes public property. The President is simply saying that

instead of waiting for Parliament to come up with a report, the ACC should go ahead with the investigations if they have enough evidence. What we have noticed in the past is that the outgone governing party have always watered down audit reports *[Applause]*. We were here and the Leader of the Opposition was in fact the Chairman of the PAC. We did real time audit of the Ebola funds and we all know what happened with that report. That report was watered down and all the recommendations from Audit Service were not considered. People at top places who were supposed to have been indicted went scot-free and small guys were indicted. The same happened with the Constitutional Review Committee after investing millions of dollars, the report was watered down *[Applause]*. I therefore support His Excellency's stand and as a Parliament, we are ready to give him the support he needs in order to ensure that we amend the Constitution. We will also amend the ACC Act to ensure that we give it more powers to bite *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to energy. I heard people saying, S.O [2] "una gee we light." Unfortunately, our colleagues on the other side are also making a lot of noise about it. For the past ten years, the APC led government has been talking about Energy. To be very honest, His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio should have been concentrating on something else instead of energy. We are still talking about Energy. By now, solar renewable energy should have been all over this country, considering the amount of moneys the Government invested in the Energy sector. Unfortunately, we are here again talking about Energy. I feel sorry for our country. But I am sure it will never happen again. You are going to stay on that side for a very long time. I want to inform the people of this country what is happening right now. The Bumbuna Hydro Power Supply, which normally supplies Freetown, is under maintenance. As a result, electricity output from Bumbuna is zero at the moment. But because the APC subject this country to a very expensive company known as Aggrego, they are spending billions and billions of Leones on fuel alone. This country cannot afford that amount to be paid to that Company. So, what the 'New Direction' is doing at

the moment is that we are negotiating with several power producing companies. And in a very short time, we will have 24 hours electricity supply in this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I look at the Economy. I noticed that Honourable Members on the other side have been struggling to tell the people of this country that we presided over the best economy in the World. But let me tell you what is happening. With your permission I would to read. We have the facts and figures and I would not want to miss them at all. His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was absolutely right to state that he inherited the worst economy since independence. I am going to state the reasons why the President said that. He inherited a public debt of over **Le16tln**. The inflation at the moment is **15%** and the foreign reserve is 2.9 months of imports, which is equivalent to **\$507mln**. So, if you heard the APC trumpeting **\$507mln** that constitutes only 2.9 months of imports. For the Leones to be stabilised, we need **\$1bln** as reserve, not **\$500mln**, which is six months of import. Mr Speaker, 2.9 imports is what the APC left for this country. But let me tell you something when President Kabba left in 2007, he left 5.3 months import cover and you left 2.9 months import cover.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, President Koroma handed over an empty and shattered Economy with an overdraft at the Bank of Sierra Leone, which is over **Le160bln**. At the moment, the APC led Government also left unpaid cheques to contractors, including Members of Parliament, universities, our forces and non-payment to hospitals. This amount alone is over **Le13tln**. These are facts, Honourable Members. For infrastructural projects, i.e., Energy, roads, water etc, and the debt arrears left behind is over **Le18tln**. Mr Speaker, I do not know whether it is permissible, but it is hurtful. I feel sad to announce to the people of this country that the past Government did not pay NASSIT up to the day President Koroma handed over power to President Bio, amounting to **Le221bln**. None payment of NASSIT as at 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2018, which was the day he handed over power. In fact, we have our brothers and sisters working for Government and every month the Government will deduct NASSIT from their salaries, but the APC did not pay NASSIT from January 2017 to April 2018.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the worse situation we have found ourselves. So, His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was very correct to say that he inherited the worse Economy since independence. Unlike what the Leader of the Opposition was saying, are you aware that the IMF, World Bank and other donors, left the country due to poor economic management? With all these, President Bio was right to emphatically say he inherited the worse Economy since independence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to indiscipline. I have always said that the SLPP is a very disciplined party. When people started talking about violence and indiscipline, it is because of you on that side. I will read something for you to hear. This was in the Telegraph Newspaper, dated 28<sup>th</sup> December, 2012. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I read: **“Lawlessness is too much in the country, no country can prosper in the midst of lawlessness. You have voted for my second and last term and I thank all those who voted for me, but please I want you all to realise that this is going to be my last term and I am all set to live a legacy as a former president. I am not ready to part company with friends and relatives, no more business as usual. It does not mean because I did not jail anyone in my first five years in the mist of rudeness and lawlessness the same will continue. I am warning those with ears to hear me. I wish you all a prosperous New Year.”** That was President Koroma’s Speech in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you can see that even the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, suffered a lot. For five years, there was so much indiscipline. I have always said I wish he had not even made that statement because after that statement, indiscipline and rudeness worsened at the highest level. It was during this period we saw the sacking of an elected Vice President. It was after that statement we began to hear the ‘5 Os,’ or clique boys all over Freetown. That is why I said I wish the former President had not made that kind of statement. I am sure a lot of people know that there were people on the other side in the last Government who were actually paying those clique boys.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must work as a team to ensure that discipline is restored to this country. I can assure you that under the leadership of His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, there will be discipline. He has already started with fiscal discipline.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, food security is very important. This government and the previous government were spending hundreds of billions of Dollars to import rice. So, when His Excellency said that the political class and upper level must demonstrate interest in agriculture as a prerequisite for holding political offices in the country, I believe we must support that idea. I have already started consultations and I will continue consulting. Once I am done with that, I am going to introduce a Bill in this Parliament, which will mandate investment in agriculture as a requirement for holding public and political office.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Free Education flagship programme of the President. In the last four days, colleagues from both sides of the aisle have said a lot about the Free Education programme. I want to however bring some current information to you for the general public. From the debate, it is very clear that everybody or all the political parties in this House are in support of the Free Education. But it is not just the Free Education, it is free quality education. Also, there are concerns whether we can even afford it, or whether it will happen. Honourable Members, I want to report to this Honourable House that professionals at the Ministries of Education are in full support of the provision of free quality education. And as such, steps are necessary to ensure support of the following key stakeholders. In other words, these are the stakeholders that are being identified by the Ministry of Education to ensure that we have a successful free quality education; i.e., the Sierra Leone Teachers Union, Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools, National Conference of Head Teachers, National Council for Technical, Vocational and Other Awards, Civil Society Organisations, other development partners, donors and NGOs, Local government institutions, traditional rulers and leaders, religious leaders and organisations, West African Examination Council, Proprietors of Schools, and Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will recall that the Honourable Ministers have just been nominated and approved by this Honourable House, but because of the pronouncement of His Excellency the President that free education will start in September, 2018 they have gone to work. As such, they have already identified that the main implementation challenges would be timely and sustainable provision of needed resources, financial materials, human resources, etc. They have already provided the amicable provision for not only the children who are enrolled in schools, but all school going age children, whether in or out of school, including those above school age who are already in the system. For now, this Government will provide free admission and tuition, starting from September, 2018. We will provide free meals at pre-primary and primary levels. That one also will start in September, 2018. We will provide furniture to new schools. We are going to ensure that additional class rooms are made available. We would commence the construction of additional class rooms and to also begin surveying across the country of potential candidate for schools.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, recruitment of trained and qualified additional teachers, inclusion of more trained and qualified teachers on the pay roll will commence in September, 2018. I am pleased to announce that the Ministry has already met with the Teaching Service Commission and they are going to be fully functional. The Commission will now be in charge of recruiting teachers. Free core text books and associate teacher guides and teachers reference text books will be provided in 2019-2020 school year. However, lesson plans for Mathematics and English for senior secondary schools will be in place this year, starting from September, 2018. We would have to understand that there will be no more SSS4 and there is going to be a reintroduction of the civics and other subjects in our curriculum. Therefore, a new curriculum will be developed and base on those curricular, the Ministry will buy text books from abroad. We will continue to pay school fees for national and international examinations and that will also start this year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we will upgrade the teachers and employ as necessary. In other words, starting from September, 2018 we are going to start training

teachers. By the second term of the year, we will start deploying those teachers to ensure effective work. We are going to provide facilities needed for quality teaching of Science and Technology and this will commence in 2019-2020 academic year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is going to be a full blueprint that will be ready by the end of June for parliamentary approval. I want to inform this House that the Conference of Principals of Secondary Schools has already agreed and they are in full support of moving from the 6-3-4-4 to 6-3-3-4 system of education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give you some statistics to know how serious and how expensive these ventures are going to be. If we have every Sierra Leonean child going to school, like the Honourable Kandeh Kolloh Yumkella was saying, we are going to have a total of three million, two hundred and four thousand children going to school. And we have an estimated over age to be accommodated because we know that we have over age children and this is now the opportunity for them to go to school because of the Free Education. They will want to go back to school and we have estimated about forty-four thousand of them.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the most challenging thing is that we are going to need more than a hundred thousand trained and qualified teachers. The Ministry of Education has gone ahead to make plans for our various wards. We are going to have ward education Committees and during the presentation, they are going to make a formal presentation to this House to plead with the Members of Parliament to ensure that they are in charge of those ward Committees. This is because it is through those ward education Committees we are going to have school materials going to the constituencies and chiefdoms. We want Members of Parliament and the Paramount Chiefs to oversee those developments. Mr Speaker, this is brief information I wanted to share with you. For the critics who think the free education is not possible, I want to assure them that it is going to work. There is already a blueprint and this blueprint would be presented to Parliament for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with those few words, be it resolved that we the Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President for

the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we do not need any person from outside in this Well to choreograph what has just happened. I think quite frankly we have expert in that business.

Honourable Members, it has been a wonderful week. You set yourself the tone, the temperament, and the agenda for the months ahead. I wish you well as we embark on the very difficult task of discharging the onerous responsibilities; i.e., constitutional responsibilities particularly that you all carry. I congratulate all of you for a brilliant debates on the Presidential Speech.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament, on Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, has been carried]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before we adjourn, I now wish to read out the following delegations to international organisations that will represent this noble House.

1. COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION [CPA]

- Dr Abass Chernor Bundu, Leader of delegation;
- Hon. Sidie M. Tunis, Desk Officer;
- Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah, Desk Officer;
- Hon. Mohamed Billoh Shaw, Member;
- Hon. Massey N. Aruna, Member;
- Hon. Mohamed Bangura, Member;
- Hon. Kadijatu Davies, Member;
- Hon. Musa Fofanah, Member;
- Hon. P.C Haja Bintu Fatmata Meama Kague IV, Member; and

- Hon. Umar Paran Tarawally, Secretary.
2. INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION [IPU]
- Hon. Bernadette W. Songa, head of delegation;
  - Hon. Yusuf Mackery, Deputy Head of delegation;
  - Hon. Christopher K. Vandy, Member;
  - Hon. Josephine Makieue, Member;
  - Hon. Osman Abdal Timbo, Member;
  - Hon. Daniel B. Koroma, Member;
  - Hon. Hajaratu Faith H. Samura, Member;
  - Hon. Kemokoh Conteh, Member;
  - Hon. Abdul Titus Kamara, Member [NGC];
  - Hon. Rebecca Yei Kamara, Member;
  - Hon. Emilia Loloh Tongi, Member;
  - Hon. Joseph Williams Lamin, Member;
  - Hon. P.C Bai Shebora Sheba Gbepeh III, Member; and
  - Hon. P.C Bubu Bai Farama Tass Bubu Ngbak IV, Member.
3. SIERRA LEONE ISRIEL PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP CAUCUS
- Hon. Serajie R. Kamara, Head of Delegation;
  - Hon. Ishmael S. Sandy, Deputy Leader of Delegation;
  - Hon. Sidie M. Tunis, Member;
  - Hon. Ibrahim T. Conteh, Member;
  - Hon. Aiah D. Kassegbama, Member;
  - Hon. Abdul T. Kamara, Member;
  - Hon. Alusine K. Conteh, Member;
  - Hon. Rugiatu R. Kanu, Member;
  - Hon. Isaac Tarawally, Member;
  - Hon. Jamal Ozan Tholley, Member; and
  - Hon. Abdul Turay, Member;

#### 4. SIERRA LEONE IRAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP GROUP

- Hon. Christopher K. Vandy, Head of Delegation;
- Hon. Alhassan J. Kamara, Deputy Head of Delegation;
- Hon. Sidie M. Tunis, Member;

Honourable Members, I pause here because I am getting worried. On that note, I think my pause will continue indefinitely. We need further consultation.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Membership of the Parliamentary delegations to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association [CPA], Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] and the Sierra Leone Israel Parliamentary Friendship Caucus as announced by the Speaker has been approved]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, for the rest of the delegations, I will invite the leaders of all political parties to meet with me for further consultations. We will continue the announcement at the next adjourned date. With that, Honourable Members, I crave your indulgence to be very understanding. My reason for seeking further consultations on the matter is simply because I have only received the list of the delegations. Frankly, we need to discuss this matter further.

Honourable Members, we need to amend the Order Paper. The next item is Announcement of Sessional Select Committees. I have also been advised that this should be postponed to next week Tuesday. For that reason, Mr Leader, I will advise that we expunge it from the Order Paper for it to reappear on the Oder Paper for Tuesday. So, the Order Paper is amended by expunging Item IV for its reappearance on the Order Paper for the next adjourned date. If no objection, I take it as being agreed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 1:25 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.]*