

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

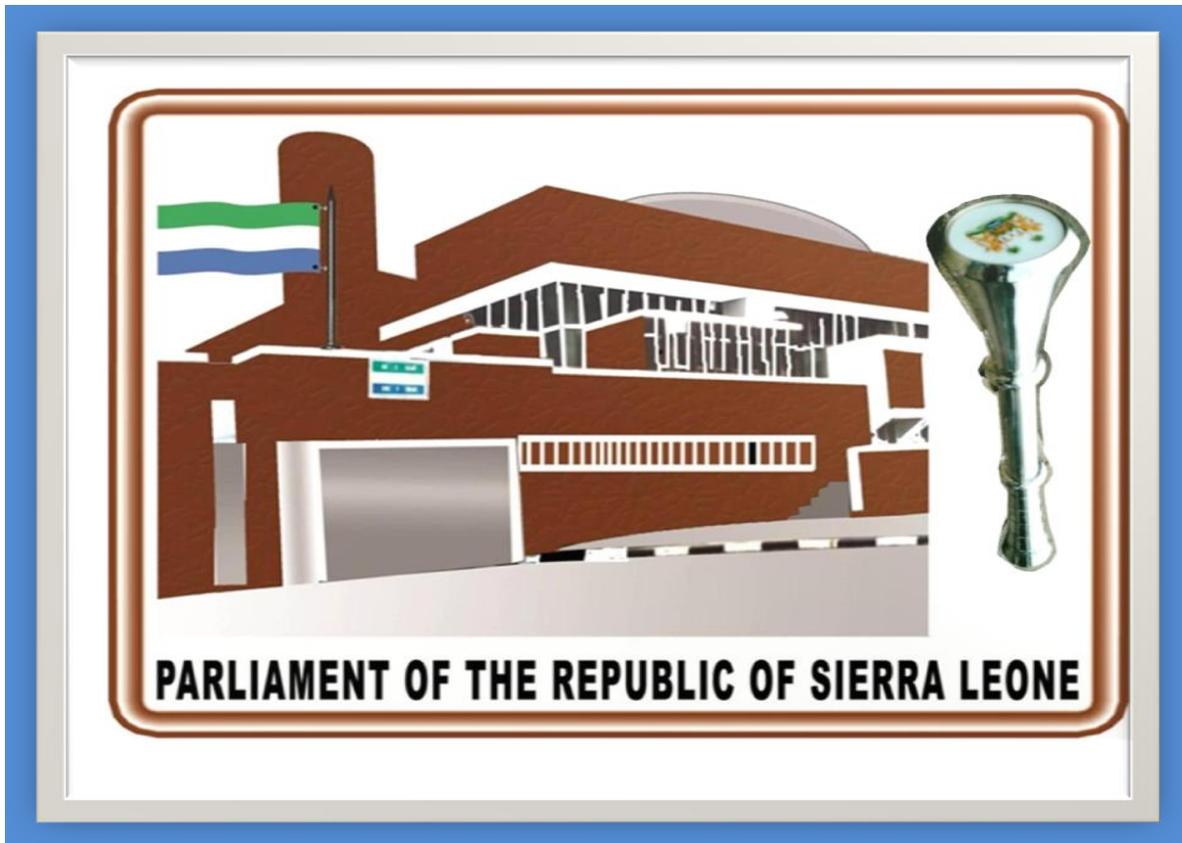
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 2ND NOVEMBER, 2017

SESSION – 2016/2017



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 2nd November, 2017.

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BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2017.

FINANCING AGREEMENT [ADDITIONAL FINANCING FOR THE REVITALISING EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN SIERRA LEONE PROJECT] BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION [IDA], DATED 27TH JULY, 2017

IV. BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2018

BEING AN ACT TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND FOR THE SERVICES OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE YEAR 2018 AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 2nd November, 2017.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Anthony C. Kamara, Read the Prayers].

[The House met at 10:43 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2017.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 1st November, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6. There being no amendment or correction, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 1st November, 2017 as presented?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOHAMED KAMARA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure there is no counter motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 1st November, 2017 has been adopted as presented]

III. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR MOMOH VANDI *[Deputy Minister of Finance and Economic Development]:*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following agreement, which was laid on the Table of the House on Wednesday, 1st November, 2017.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, please endeavour to be brief.

THE MINISTER: Financing Agreement [Additional Financing for the Revitalising Education Development in Sierra Leone Project] between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], Dated 27th July, 2017

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would recall that this Honourable House ratified grant agreement from the Global Partnership for Education to the tune of **\$17,000,900** and the UK Department for International Development [DFID] in the amount of **\$5,500,000** in September, 2014. The total amount of the project was **\$23,000,400** and is meant to finance the revitalising educational development in Sierra Leone. This additional financing of **\$10,000,000** has been approved by the World Bank to increase the resources that are approved under this project and specifically to improve the learning environment in targeted schools and establish systems for monitoring of education interventions and outcomes. This project consists the following three parts;

Part 1- Improving the learning environment and opportunities in targeted areas. This part involves:

1. provision of additional grant performance based school grant to eligible schools, supported by the original project against the achievement of performance indicators;
2. provision of technical advisory services and training for the validation and monitoring of the achievement against said performance indicators;
3. expansion of performance based schools grant to eligible schools not supported by the original projects; and
4. Operationalising and strengthening the capacity of the Teaching Services Commission for delivery of its statutory mandate or through the provisions of technical adviser services, training, operating cost and acquisition of goods for the purpose.

Part 2- Strengthening Educational Service Delivery. This involves the establishment of robust school data collection and analysis systems in carrying out annual school censuses.

Part 3- Project Management and Supervision. This involves strengthening the capacity of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for the day to day implementation, coordination and management project activities and results through

the provision of technical advisory services, training, operating cost and acquisition of goods for the purpose.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a result of the disruption caused by the Ebola Virus Disease, only partial progress was made towards the achievement of education sector plan's original target. The overall participation rate appeared to decline in 2015 compared to the immediate pre-Ebola period. Schools were shut down for the foreseeable future during this period at least **20%** of educational institutions plus unqualified teachers and/or students with significant increase in the incidence of teenage pregnancy. A post-Ebola recovery and transition plan was launched for key sectors, including the educational sectors to address the immediate post-Ebola crisis.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, giving the expected gains that will be achieved under this revitalisation educational development in Sierra Leone project in terms of direct budget support for targeted primary and secondary schools, improving the learning environment for schools by providing additional classrooms, learning and teaching materials, giving technical advisory services to the Teaching Service Commission and collecting adequate data on the schools in Sierra Leone to ensure adequate management of education system in Sierra Leone, I move that this Honourable House ratify the Financing Agreement [Additional Financing for the Revitalizing Educational Development in Sierra Leone Project], between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], Dated 27th July, 2017 which was laid on the Table of this Honourable House on Wednesday, 1st November, 2017. I thank you for your attention.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Government Motion by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development has been ratified]

IV. BILL

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2018

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, it seems as if you are not ready to contribute today. Honourable Members, we have to be very brief like what we did yesterday. When your ten minutes is up, I will ask you to sit down.

HON. AMADU KANU: I will be very brief, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with the leave of Mr Speaker, I rise to lend my voice to this ongoing tradition, as enshrined in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, in tandem with the revised Standing Orders of the Sierra Leone Parliament, Standing Orders 63-69. I also want to draw the attention of Honourable Members to the fact that the said provision in this Constitution mandated us, as Members of Parliament and as a Parliament, to authorise expenditure from the Consolidated Fund, so that government business continue to function properly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the document we are discussing is a very fine document and I will describe it as the peoples' budget. It is the peoples' budget because what is contained on Page 27, followed by the budget profile, represents the interest of the people of this country. This Government is mindful of the fact that Sierra Leoneans at home and abroad supported and voted us into various elected positions because of diverse reasons. You will agree with me that some Sierra Leoneans gave us their support the other day because of the confidence they have in our political party. This is not politics, but like it happened the other day in Kailahun Court Barry, where Sierra Leoneans from that part of the country supported and voted their party blindly because of the love they had for that party. We are all witnesses to the five years transformative achievements of His Excellency the President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. After the five years transformation, the voting pattern from that part of the country took a dramatic turn. The point I want to make is that it is true that Sierra Leoneans

gave us their support because of the love of our party. Some supported us for political gains and other related reasons, but majority of the people of this country supported us for no other reason than a change and that is what is contained in this document.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is contained in this document is all about the delivery of goods and services. My colleague Honourable Member from Bo always gives the impression that Members on the other side of this Well had the intention to do 'x,' 'y' and 'z.' I will always call his attention to the fact that the business of politics is all about delivery instead of intention. For the economists, it is just like production because the aim of production, in economics, is to satisfy human wants; and you will agree with me that production itself is said to be complete only when the goods and services reach the table of the final consumer. Coming to the budget itself, the budget is divided into five parts and I want to agree with the Minister. The theme for this year's budget is **"strengthening resilience for inclusive growth."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you recall, our distinguished Honourable Minister of Finance is a friend of this House and he is also my 'demia,' 'komaneh' [my in-law]. In his last submission, he reminded us that the driving force behind this budget is anchored on our enduring passion and desire. This budget is geared towards bringing prosperity to the people of this country. Against that background, I will just proffer advice that has to do with the submission made by the Minister. The advice has something to do with diversification of our economy.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please do that in two minutes.

HON. AMADU M. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if agriculture is anything we are to take seriously and if the premise we are making about having sustainable food in this country is something we have to do with all seriousness, we have to encourage chieftdom farming. I want to suggest that in the next budget, we make sure that we allocate funds to our Paramount Chiefs to have chieftdom farms. We can get Honourable Members to do oversight as a way of monitoring their activities. Again, the Auditor-General should also monitor their activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is need for us to revisit our mining agreements, so that apart from their corporate social responsibilities, we will now begin to target prospective exploration license holders to have mining exploration firms. This is very important and we should also have road contractors to make investments in farming within their area of operation.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, everything we say about this budget anchors on two things: the fall in the prices of iron ore and the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease. Therefore, we must put mechanisms in place that will cater for unforeseen circumstances. That is one area I want to recommend because we should have our own local steel industries, so that we do not just depend on mining. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I feel privileged this morning because this could be one of my last debates for this parliamentary session. I want to thank my colleagues on the other side, Honourable Amadu Fofanah, for the statistical analysis he made yesterday. He spoke about budget formulation and implementation. However, what I found very difficult to agree in his presentation is the fact that, as a professional Accountant, consistency should be his watch word. I am saying this because the Honourable Amadu Fofanah vividly criticised and he even referred to the last budget that was presented to this Parliament as a very bad document. I want to state here that the then Foreign Affairs Minister, who is now the flag-bearer for the All Peoples Congress [APC], was mentioned in that document as the Financial Secretary then. He said the document was a good document. That is the highest level of inconsistency.

THE SPEAKER: Were you misquoted or what? Are you sure that you have been misquoted?

HON. AMADU FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, I did read the exact statement contained in the document that was in front of me.

THE SPEAKER: And that was what you quoted. Honourable Member, please advise yourself.

HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I were the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, I would have given the theme of this years' budget as 'What is it that we have not got right as a country.' For the edification of my colleague who was talking about electricity and infrastructural developments yesterday, I want to refer you to the 2015 Budget. The theme of the 2015 Budget stated thus: **"Restoring livelihood for post-Ebola economic and social recovery."** I am referring you to this document based on the fact that when the Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP] was in governance from 1996 to 2007, they had issues they responded to. And I want to state here that those issues were very serious. They adversely affected our country, which was the rebel war. That war caused serious infrastructural damage to this country. Therefore, I want to say kudos to the Sierra Leone Peoples Party, particularly to the late President, His Excellency Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba. When the civil war was finally declared over in 2002, the final budget was laid in 2007 in this Parliament. The SLPP led Government was able to generate about **10%** megawatt of electricity in this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, did you say **10%** or 10 megawatts.

HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I was referring to 10 megawatts. I am very sorry about the mistake. I want to draw the attention of colleagues that between 1996 and 2007, the requirement of Government was to resettle our displaced people. In other words, the priority of Government at that time was to provide the basic social needs for the displaced. The basic priority of Government at that time was to ensure that the **70%** to **80%** children of this country who were displaced were returned to schools. Those were the priorities of Government at that time. The Government focused on building schools and other social infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here talking about development and I want to ask a simple question for those of us who have been at the development platforms. The question is what are the benchmarks? If you say somebody is doing well, what is

your comparative analysis? Are you benchmarking with Liberia, Guinea, Ghana, Nigeria, or other countries in the sub-region? We are saying that we have done a lot, but what are the benchmarks? We do not have benchmarks at all. I have made an analysis from 1996 to 2007 and I also listed the priorities of Government at that time. I made a special reference to the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic in 2014. I stated that after the cessation of the Ebola epidemic, the budget presented before us was a recovery plan budget. It was meant to revive our economy and to resettle the Ebola victims socially and economically. That is the responsibility of every Government and this budget is meant to strengthen our economy and to support the Ebola victims. This budget is also going to ensure what we can recover from what we have lost to the Ebola I am saying this because we are in crisis. So, I want to tell you that we should think reasonably around what we are doing in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if I have to take you again to the previous budgets, we have had the 2016 Budget in this House with the theme, **“Economic Diversification.”** Again, if you look at the 2016 Budget, it was also talking about ‘Economic Diversification.’ The question is what have we diversified in this country when we still have MDAs that can invest, but cannot realise returns. The Ministry of Agriculture is a very good example. There is nowhere in the world you have big capital investment in agriculture and cannot actually see the returns. If you invest in Tourism, you expect returns from that investment. The Government consistently focused on infrastructure in the past ten years. Why is it that we are just investing on road infrastructure? We are here talking about economic diversification. For me, I see a total disjoint and inconsistency in Government policies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take you back to the Ebola crisis we experienced in this country. You will agree with me that we were not able to swiftly respond to the Ebola crisis because we had not prepared for emergency situations. We had no institution that can easily respond to emergency issues in this country. After the Ebola scourge, we had the mudslide and even when that happened, we still could not have a response team. We do not have a responsible emergency response team in this

country. If you look at this budget, there is no commitment on the part of Government to address issues relating to disaster management. What this budget did, if you look at Page 14, was to actually say the African Development Bank or World Bank will help us to set up teams that could manage our emergency response. That is not the responsibility of our external players. It should be the primary responsibility of the Government of every state. That is to say, you must be able to build institutions that could respond to your emergency situation, particularly disaster.

HON. RTD CAPT. FREDERICK S. SOURIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to lend my voice to this debate. In any debate, when a subsequent debater comes up, he has to start from where the last debater ended. So, I want to start with where the last speaker talked about benchmarking.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you want to assess your progress in life, you have to look at where you came from and where you are going. That is the benchmark we are talking about. The benchmark is not based on what other people are doing. Let me give you a figure and I would give you an example we are familiar with; i.e., the child mortality rate in this country. When the SLPP took over power, the figure was 480 child mortality rate in this country. This means that for every 1,000 children reproduced, at least 400 died on average. That is the figure and it is available on the UNICEF Website. As we speak, the child mortality rate in this country stands as 112. This information is available on the UNICEF Website. The UNICEF Report is on the Website for your consumption [*Applause*]. Therefore, if you want to assess the governments to ascertain whether they have done well, I think what we will benchmark is what the SLPP left for us; i.e., 360. That is what they left for us in 2007. The comparative analysis shows that we have made progress in that direction. If we are going to benchmark, our benchmark is that it is the intention of the Government to reduce our child mortality rate from 360 to at least 85. We have not reached there yet, but the President of this nation has never said he had reached there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start looking at other issues, like the disaster management. If you go to the Paragraph 64, Page 14, you will see what I am

talking about. When I was going through the SLPP budgets, the 2006 Budget was read by Mr John Oponjo Benjamin, who came second in their last flag bearer contest. Page 6, Paragraph 10 of that document states: **“Despite our achievements, the living standards of the majority of the population remains low.”** In this regard, if we are going to benchmark our success in terms of fighting poverty, we are going to start with that statement by the then Minister of Finance. He acknowledged the fact that living standards of the people were very low; and today, we are seeing improvement. I am going to give you my practical experience. Before I came to Parliament this morning, I went to a welding shop to get spare keys for my vehicle. I asked the welder whether he has been using generator to do his work. The welder said: S.O 2, ‘astafulai’ [May God forbid]. Mr Speaker, within 30 minutes, the welder was able to make **Le 60,000**. In other words, I paid him **Le 60,000** for his service. I asked again the cost of electricity. He replied that he usually spends **Le 110,000** per month. I said you are spending **Le 110,000** per month and you have just made **Le 60,000** in 30 minutes. This means that his life must have improved. The welder said: S.O 2, **“Yes, are don even buy two okadas.”** That was what he said, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is my practical experience. Many people have been saying that Government usually puts the figures on paper in the form of Budget, but the people are not realising the benefits. In other words, those figures are not translated into bread and butter. I have just given you a simple example of how the budget can be translated into bread and butter for our people. This implies that we are making progress.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state again how the budgets have been transforming our lives. I recently experienced an emergency movement to Kono. I went to Kono and returned the same day because of good road. To me, that is progress and that in itself is capable of transforming into bread and butter for the people of Sierra Leone because you can do more businesses within short time. This could also mean that if you do more businesses, there will be an increase in economic activities. That can transform into improving our economic lives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo stated that the Armed Forces used to get rice supply during the SLPP. I want to state here that the statement is misleading. The Armed Forces started receiving rice supply in 1978 under the leadership of Dr Siaka P. Stevens [*Applause*]. The farming programme was stopped after the National Provisional Ruling Council [NPRC] and we had the Armed Forces Agricultural Unit established by Major Rtd. Paolo Conteh. I do not think Major Paolo Conteh was a Minister in the SLPP Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use this opportunity to tell the people of this country about what we have benefitted from the past budgets. If you go to Koidu New Senbehun City today, the second phase of the electrification project has commenced and electricity will soon be provided to the people of Yengema. I am sure many of us know Yengema. We will soon start seeing electricity in Kono District. It is not **100%**, but whatever Megawatt that is going to be provided, it will be appreciated by the people. That is progress and that progress is not going to be felt by the President, because he is not a resident of that place, but the residents of Kono District. The electricity bill will be cheaper than the one in Freetown. This is a clear indication to show that as we continue to diversify our developments, the people benefit directly. For instance, the women who used to buy ice blocks, they now have the facility to generate their own ice blocks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for some of us who are familiar with the activities of the SLPP led Government, I can state here that the former President did well in terms of ensuring that the military barrack at Wilberforce are provided with constant electricity supply. I am saying this because people used to go to those barracks to get ice block because there was general blackout in Freetown. Do we see that anymore? The answer is no. I used to have up to three freezers, which became a source of revenue generation. The people were using that facility in order to address the issue of bread and butter, but that is no more. This is a clear indication to show that we have made progress. We are not yet there and our President has never acceded to the fact that we have reached there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not going to repeat what somebody said yesterday, but I want to conclude by reminding Honourable Members about the statement made by Mr John O. Benjamin about his then Financial Secretary, who is currently our flag-bearer and that was part of his budget statement and that is why it is relevant here. If you go to the last Paragraph of the 2007 Budget, you will see the exact words of Mr John O. Benjamin. He was showering praises on Dr Samura Wilson Kamara.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the budget is a good one and Kono will support it and we stand to benefit from it.

HON. JAMES N. D. ALIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to the debate. I want to draw the attention of the Minister to a press release that was done last year on the 3rd October, 2016. That Budget spoke about the austerity measures. The 2016 Budget serves as reference for the preparation of the 2017 Budget in terms of supporting domestic revenue generation and reverses the negative impact on the economy. My question is that do you think that references were drawn to this paper? If the answer is yes, what were the lessons learnt? I am sure there were good examples we must have learnt from this paper in preparing the 2018 budget, but throughout the entire document I read, no reference was made to this press release.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to further my argument on the road infrastructure for which this government has made a lot of accolades that the praise go to the APC. I also want to refer this House to the handing over speech of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. All the roads that are being constructed now by the APC led Government were mentioned in that document. Funds were being sought for those roads projects. My concern here is the distinction between the Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA] and the Road Maintenance Fund Authority. I am sure the SLRA has a mandate in this country to construct, rehabilitate and maintain all roads in this country.

THE SPEAKER: Did you say construct?

HON. JAMES N. D. ALIE: I said the SLRA has the mandate to construct, maintain and rehabilitate. The Road Maintenance Fund [RMFA] was created basically to mobilise resources for the implementation of these road projects. But what we are seeing now is that there are lots of interplays between the RMFA and the SLRA. There should be a clear understanding in terms of roles and responsibilities of these two institutions because we are seeing RMFA awarding contracts, monitoring road construction and even determining which aspect of road maintenance should take place. There should be a clear understanding in terms of their respective roles. We also had a Mechanical Services Unit in the SLRA that is dysfunctional. What has happened to that Unit? We are asking for an investigation into the role of the Mechanical Services Unit and find out what has gone wrong with that Unit. Not long ago, there were roads like the Moyamba Junction Road which has not been mentioned. It is one of the ongoing roads, but the contract was terminated three months ago.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2007, the Makoloh/Rotifunk/Moyamba Road was awarded to a contractor, but it was terminated in 2008. As we speak, nothing is being said about that road. The Shenge Road was also a promise made in 2008 and as we speak, we have not heard anything about that road. I want to remind the Minister of Finance that feasibility studies were carried out sometime ago on the central business centre of Freetown; i.e., the Malama Thomas Street, but nothing has been done about that. The Connaught/Kington Road is very important in terms of reducing traffic congestion within the city. The SOS Services Secondary School Road was also part of those feasibility studies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one area I would want to talk about is the education sector. We spend so much money on the establishment of the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology in Magburaka every year. I want to know the status of that university because when we went on oversight function some time ago, that compound was a dead zone. There was no sign of life in that campus and we have always said that setting up a University of Science and Technology. Most schools in this country do not have a functioning laboratory and I am beginning to wonder how that

university is going to operate. Who is going to feed those universities with science students? Fourah Bah College has been under rehabilitation for the past ten years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you turn to Page 12, Paragraph 57 of this document, we are told that come 2018, twelve vocational institutions will be established in this country. My question is where are the tutors for these vocational institutions to teach in these vocational institutions. Getting tutors to teach has been one of the major factors for the establishment of those vocational institutions under the SABABU Project. Are those vocational institutions going to resume operation at the same time with the twelve institutions that the Minister is talking about? I was the project engineer then and I know what I am saying.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been asking the Minister of Education to be given a list of recommended candidates for the award of scholarships in every district. Unfortunately, they have deliberately refused to do so for reasons best known to them. Now, we are talking of student loan scheme. How is that loan scheme implemented? Who are the beneficiaries of this scheme? We need to know because loan scheme to student is a very difficult task and we do not know how it is been executed. What I am saying is that Members of Parliament need to know those who are benefiting from these loan schemes and how it is been administered. The Barefoot College has been a concern to me for the past years. I have monitored closely the budget allocation for the university and I have asked on several occasion what this college or university is doing in this country. So much money has been spent on that university; and even during Ebola crisis, there was no reduction on the subvention given to them. In 2016 Budget, this college got funds from two ministries; i.e., the Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Education. If you put the two sums together for 2016, it was about **Le2.6bln**. In 2015, it was **Le3.1bln**. There was a loan from the African Development Bank given to the Barefoot College at the same time for agricultural purposes and nobody knows who approved that loan.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the annexure on Page 301 of 2018 Budget, the sum of **Le2.1bln** is allocated under Education and **Le1.3bln** is allocated

under Energy. When you put those two figures together, it will sum up to **Le3.5bln**. If you compare that figure to the money given to the Inspectorate Division of this country, which is about **Le1bln**, it is above what the Inspectorate Division is receiving. We are talking about quality education and the Inspectorate Division is understaffed. What are we saying here? Are we paying lip service to education or we do not mean anything? The sum total is **Le3.5bln** and when you compare that to what has been allocated to the vocational institutions all over this country, it is about **Le2.8bln**. One college is taking **Le3bln** and the total amount allocated to technical vocational institutions in this country is just about **Le2.8bln**. We are talking about the C-Jimmy Fall, which is in my constituency, Moyamba District and nothing has been said about that. That is a potential mini-hydro of about 8 to 10 megawatt, but nothing has been said about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at local governance. We see very recently that there were a lot of de-amalgamation of chiefdoms, creation of new districts and regions. Twenty more constituencies were created and we are talking about pressure. One will want to know the rationale behind that and if there is no ulterior motive. We are talking of pressure on our expenditure and we are expanding on our expenditure rate. We should therefore reduce our expenditures. I thank you.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start this debate by looking at the 2017 and 2018 budgets. I am doing a comparative analysis. In 2017, we had a budget in this Parliament that introduced the austerity measures and we took time to explain to the people of this country and to Members of Parliament on the other side, why we should increase the taxes on income. That is the income tax that saw a reduction in the take home of not only Members of Parliament, but all workers in this country. We also took time to justify why we increased the corporate tax. Apart of that, we also took time to explain and defend why we should increase the prices of fuel. At the time, it was a bitter pill to swallow and our colleagues on the other side had only one lens which was the green lens. Therefore, they were unable to see the gains of last year's budget. But because of the sacrifices we made in last year's budget and the macro-economic measures that were put in place by this Government,

we have a budget that is business friendly. It is business friendly budget because this Government concentrated on the mobilisation of domestic revenue by other alternative measures; i.e., increasing taxes. That is why it is a business friendly budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last speaker from Bo spoke about benchmarks and my colleague from Kono attempted to provide explanation on why we should say our country has improved. In any economic analysis, we always look at key economic variables and these economic variables include inflation, economic growth and the exchange rates among other things. So, to provide a better explanation as to why I said that this budget is a very good, I made a comparative analysis of four countries; i.e., Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. If you look at the real GDP growth of these countries, the economic growth on real GDP for Nigeria was negative in 2016; i.e., -1.5. For this year, there is a slight increase or growth of 0.8. The reference or the source of this data or statistics I am providing is the IMF Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan African Countries. In Nigeria, it was -1.5 in 2016. This means Nigeria was in a recession. The increase in growth took place by 0.8.

In Ghana, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it was positive of 4.0 and an increase of 5.8. For Liberia it was -1.2 in 2016. There is an increase in growth of 3.0. Sierra Leone, despite the external shocks; i.e., the fell in the piece of iron ore and the outbreak of the Ebola virus, we had an economic growth of 4.9 in 2016 and this increased to 5.6 in 2017. This shows that if you take the Economic Community of West African States [ECOWAS] countries on average, the expected increase in economic growth is 2.3 and Sierra Leone records 5.6. This is a clear indication to show that this Government is very serious and takes the economy of this country very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about inflation. Inflation in Nigeria was **18.5%** in 2016, but they record a decline of **17.5%** in 2017. Ghana was **15.4%** in 2016 it is now **10%** in 2017. Liberia is **12.5 %** and now **10.5%**. Sierra Leone was 17%, but a prospect of a single digit of **9%** is recorded for 2016. On average, the inflation of ECOWAS countries is **18.17**. This shows that our economy is improving and that is why we are seeing a downward trend in the inflation rate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I provided those data for my colleague on the other side to understand that we have benchmarks that are helping this country and that is why the IMF is providing all the support we need. I want to refer the Minister of Finance as the Douglas of Sierra Leone. This is because if you apply the Douglas theory, which this Government is using [when I look at the successes of this country in terms of infrastructural development and human capital development], I see a situation the Ernest Bai Koroma's Government has provided the enabling environment for the next President of this country, Dr Samura Kamara, to add more value to the economy of Sierra Leone.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me say this again, I may not have an opportunity to say it after today that we politicians continue to get problems by what we say and do in this House. What we say here has, to a very large extent, always contributed to the rising anger of the people of this country. The people of this country usually make their assessments and arrive at verdicts from the kind of inputs we make from uninformed perspectives. It is sad and unfortunate that we have always had this opportunity of putting, at the disposal of our colleagues, the facility for them to appreciate the difference between a government coming to power from conflict as against a government coming to power on a silver platter. You would recall that the SLPP Government came to power after a prolonged civil war.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a Member of Parliament from the Western Area created the impression that the SLPP Government did not perform as expected. He read excerpts from the John O. Benjamin's Budget. That is fine and those statements are on record, but sometimes at a time like this it is important for some people to come on stage to save this country from the politics of lies and destructions. To give effect to that, I will refer to the budget speech of Mr David O. Carew, which was delivered in this Parliament on the 21st December, 2007, two months before the APC led Government took over power. If we are to go by the calculations of the Honourable David O. Carew, that Honourable Member should not have said what he had said. Let me now tell you what he said about the performance of the SLPP led Government. He said: **"Mr**

Speaker, Honourable Members, as we continue to achieve a relatively strong macro-economic performance since 2002 when the conflict officially ended, Sierra Leone has also continued to strengthen peace and consolidate democracy as demonstrated by the smooth and peaceful presidential and parliamentary elections that took place in August and September of this year.”

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, which of the parties that was in power in 2002. This was a party coming to power from a state conflict. The Chinese have a proverb which says 'what you speak so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.' I can say it in Chinese and in French. I started by saying that we get problem by what we say in this House. I am talking about Parliament... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you cannot say that. You have to rephrase your statement. We do not get problems because of what we say here.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Some of our utterances contribute to the rising anger of the people of this country.

THE SPEAKER: That is better, but do not get problems because of what we say here.

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

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have read the budget and the Minister mentioned expenditure rationalisation. What is the definition of expenditure rationalisation as it is practice by the APC? The answer is deprivation and inactivity of of MDAs. It is not misinformation. Some of you just want to say what the leader wants to hear; and in doing so, you do not get things moving at all. We should try to call things by their names. Like somebody said, to thyself be true. I am being true to myself. Very soon we are going to have the appropriation exercise. These MDAs will come and tell you that this was what was allocated to us, but we can tell you that since we got the 1st and 2nd quarters, we have not received the balance allocation. I do not even know how you can reconcile this with your idea of performance contract because some of these MDAs based their projections on revenue allocated to them from the

budget. Why are you failing to give them what you pledged to give them? How do you expect them to perform? We are paying lip services to performance contracts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about local content and our perception or rationale behind the promotion of the local content policy is to give leverage to our national identity and local productivity. However, the 'hen that laid the golden eggs should be paid attention to.' We cannot be talking about local content policy when you allow foreign companies to compete with them and the cement factory is a very good example. We are producing enough cement here to satisfy the market, but we allow companies to be awarded contracts to import cement from other countries. Sometimes it is just one man business. These companies are employing about 100 Sierra Leoneans here and the man who imports these cements is doing everything by himself and his accountants. Who is benefiting in this country more?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will give you one more minute to repeat what you have just said and you have to be careful. Honourable Members, please listen.

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: What I said was that if we are not paying lip services to the local content policy, we should be encouraging local industries to flourish and we should not put them in competition under unfavourable circumstances. For example, if a company is producing cement but is unable to produce enough for the market, then we can encourage that kind of competition. However, if we have enough cement produced in this country, why are we allowing other companies to come and compete with our local industry?

THE SPEAKER: Are you saying that we should stop importation?

HON. FRANK KPOSOWA: No, Mr Speaker. We should do things that will promote the local market.

HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you for the opportunity to lend my voice to this historic budget debate in this House. We have listened to many speakers since the start of the debate yesterday. They have made

their own points, some are untrue, inaccurate, unfounded, baseless, propaganda and some are based on deceit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start with education. Yesterday, two speakers from the other side of the isle castigated this Government for implementing a policy that is geared towards retaining infants or young people in schools; i.e., the school feeding programme. They went further to question the commitments of this Government when it comes to education, but they failed to realise that the problem we are facing in education, in as much as it has to do with the war, has to do with the SLPP Government as well. How? If we go to the 2007 Budget presented in this House in order to improve on the educational system, you cannot tap into untrained and unqualified people and put them within the system. That is corruption in itself. I will read Page 29, Paragraph 89 of the John O. Benjamin's Budget. It says: **"The Government provided over one hundred thousand sets of teaching and learning materials and trained one thousand unqualified and untrained teachers."** These were slotted into the system hence, educational catastrophe. So, why at the end of the day you are casting aspersions and blames on a government that spends billions of Leones on education?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to add to the deceit, they went further to state that they have constructed 30 technical vocational institutes. Where? Are they up the sky? I ask each and every SLPP Member of Parliament to state where we can locate five of those vocational institutions in this country. They will not be able to do that because the vocational institutions are not there. These are some of the misleading statements that these people are continuing to tell the people of Sierra Leone. Under the SABABU Education Project, which S.O 5[2] was transformed into the: 'JOKOR PEBU' Education, this people embezzled millions and billions of Leones.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, deceit in itself is something that is not good. What you do to the people of this country is the fact that you misrepresent the facts. You tell people what is untrue and you stop looking at yourself in the mirror as to what you did in the past that resulted in your rejection by the people. Yesterday, the Honourable

Member from Kailahun said that this Government did not care about health issues. I wonder what does not care means because if it is the true meaning of the word, it does not reflect. Let me tell you what exactly this Government has done, as compared to your gross neglect of the people of this country. I will substantiate that in an admission by your very Minister of Finance in 2007. I will go to Page 26, Paragraph 79 of the 2007 Budget. It says: **"At the root however, the benefit to individuals and social wellbeing from improved health care and education are hugely significant particularly, in a country like Sierra Leone, which lies in the lower end of the human development index."** That was the state of affairs in 2007 and that statement is an admission of total neglect.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kono was talking about the Military and asked what we have done as a government. What the Ernest Bai Koroma's Government has done for the Military is never comparable to past governments. What the SLPP did to the Military is unforgivable. They downsized the Military, disbanded the Army and turned people against the Military. If you look at the annex of the 2007 Budget, you will see the billions of Leones this Government has allocated to the Military.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now go to the crocks of the seriousness of this issue. I have just got a loud applause and approval from one of the Directors of Budget from the Ministry of Finance. Let me come to this very serious issue. International relation is my specialty and the international community is where alliances are strengthened, new ones are formed, bi-lateral and trade negotiations are conducted. Several references have been made to world leaders who in the past could not set foot in the United States of America. In international relations, this APC Government has done a lot in that direction. We have established many embassies and strengthened many relations that we cannot afford to ruin. Narendra Modi of India was one of the strongest men from the Hindu tribe. He was not allowed to go to the United States [US] because he could not protect the Muslim minority in his state. Secondly, there is a difference between committing a crime in the US and committing a crime

outside the US. If you commit a crime in the US, the immigration policy cannot, in any way compromise with that. I thank you.

HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am following the cue from my colleague from the Western Area, who talked about the infrastructural development in the area of education. I am perturbed by the deceit from our colleagues from the other side, who have been misinforming the public in the areas of education and infrastructure. When you talk about infrastructure, people focus more on roads. I want to touch on infrastructure in terms of education. When you drive around Tower Hill, you will see massive infrastructural development around the Institute of Public Administration and Management [IPAM]. IPAM is under the University of Sierra Leone and there is massive construction for accommodation going on. The structures are meant to provide accommodation for the students. It is now on records that since the APC came to power, we have had more university passes than any other time in the history of this country. We have had more students with university qualifications. That is why we are embarking on rebuilding or expanding our institutions. IPAM is building a massive structure. Again, if you go to Fourah Bay College, you will see the massive infrastructural development that is ongoing at the college. The Badea Project is ongoing. New universities and vocational training centres have been established. These are ways of enhancing our human resource capacity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government has also involved in massive infrastructural development to change the facelift of this city. We have seen the Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation building being constructed. We have also seen the Office of National Security [ONS] building, the National Electoral Commission [NEC] and many other offices being constructed. These are all accolades of this Government in terms of infrastructure. Therefore, infrastructural development is not only focusing on roads, but also improving the ambiance of this city.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before President Koroma came to power, all we had to showcase was cotton tree and the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. That is all Freetown had to show, but this Government has improved the image of this city. We

are now seeing huge and nice buildings in the city. Take a look at Siaka Steven Street; Take a look at Wilberforce Street; take a look at other areas within the city. Freetown has transformed greatly. If you go to Makeni, Bo, Kono, and Kenema, you will see remarkable transformation. The streets of Kailahun are all paved for the first time in the history of this country. Kailahun can now boast of street lights, paved roads, and pipe borne water. The Honourable Member from Kailahun should thank this Government because the people in that part of the country appreciate this Government. The people of Kailahun are now talking about pipe borne water. Again, the students of Kailahun can now sit under electricity to read. That is why we have more passes in external exams nowadays. I always listen to the opposition talking about the decline in the standard of education. This Government, in its wisdom, decided to reintroduce the Senior Secondary School [SSS] 4. The introduction of the SSS 4 was deliberate because the Government wanted to make sure that when the kids go to university as mature students, they can write better English. Back in the days we had class 1-7, form 1-5, and Lower and Upper 6 when students were not matured enough to enter university, we now have a crop of students who are entering Fourah College or Njala with maturity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to quickly talk about environmental protection and disaster management. I heard the Honourable Member from Moyamba asking questions. He has nothing to say about the budget but to ask questions because he seems not to understand the budget. I think he did not read the budget and that was why he failed to comprehend issues discussed in the budget. In that regard, he decided to ask questions for the Minister to respond. To ameliorate the suffering of the people of this country, that is why this Government has deemed it fit to construct low income housing for the people of this country, especially people who are affected by the mudslide. The construction is ongoing and the evidence is there. Sooner or later, we will move those people to the affordable and more decent living condition.

HON. JAMES N.D. ALIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O 32[9]. My colleague on the other side said that I asked several questions probably because I did

not read the budget. I think it was my understanding of the budget that made me to ask those questions.

HON. ROSALINE J.D. SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I withdraw as the Speaker wishes. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we cannot over emphasised the twin shocks that affected our economy. I heard the Member from Bo saying that this Government was not prepared when the virus broke out. He is forgetting that it was the first time that this region was hit by the Ebola. Sierra Leone was not the only country that was not prepared because nobody in the sub-region knew what was going to happen. As he has put it, the Government was not prepared, but the virus finally appeared, we took a proactive action. The people in the South-East never accepted the fact that Ebola was real, especially those in the Eastern Province. We had Members of Parliament going on radio, telling their people that Ebola was not real. Did they accept the fact that Ebola was indeed real? The disease would not have ravished this country the way it did, but that notwithstanding, the Government took the necessary action to ensure that the virus is conquered. Again, when the mudslide happened, the Government took proactive measures. We were on the scene, the ambulances were there and every Sierra Leonean participated in the process. This was due to our readiness. I want to assure the people of this country that this Government is ready and it is prepared to tackle unforeseeable disaster. Disasters are unforeseeable incidents, but the Government is putting measures in place to ensure that future disasters are combated as soon as it emerges.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at education. This Government is putting emphasis on skill training centres. We want to fill the strength of the middle man power and that is why we are putting emphasis on building the capacity of the middle man power by bringing in more skills and vocational training centres. The APC flag-bearer witnessed the graduation ceremony of students from a skill training centre last week. This Government is ready to get more skill training centres in order to ensure that our youth are empowered and gainfully employed.

[The House was adjourned for 30 minutes]

HON. GLADYS GBEMOH GBAPPY-BRIMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my humble contribution to the Bill before us; i.e., the Appropriation Act, 2018. In simple terms, this Act is actually asking us to authorise the Ministry of Finance to generate and provide resources from the Consolidated Fund for the services of Sierra Leone. In making my contribution, I want to make few clarifications. Definitely, we tend to forget the reality. The reality here is that when we talk about Government, we all know the system we are operating. We know we have two political parties in this House. In terms of decision making, we have the majority and minority parties and our mandate is to give authority to the Ministry of Finance. And in doing so, we are acting on behalf of our people. Sometimes we tend to forget that the resources we are talking about come from the people we are representing here. Therefore, we have to be careful with the way we make our contributions. For the past five years, I have been here and whenever a debate of this nature comes to this House, we tend to have listeners across the country. Again, this is the only opportunity Members of Parliament have to make their contributions, but this year's budget is not widely discussed around the country. In other words, if you go around Freetown, you will realise that people are not discussing the budget as it used to happen. I think people have lost interest in what has been presented here. However, our mandate is very clear on this.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we do not have enough time to discuss the intricacies of this budget, but I want to look at key areas. As Honourable Members, the budget has been presented to us to give authority. Additionally, we are expected to do our oversight. For the past few years, it has been disheartening to note that this Parliament that approves the use of resources generated by our Government, Members of Parliament have not been given enough resources to undertake oversight functions. For me, oversight activities are very crucial because through our oversight functions, you would be able to understand the achievements and challenges faced by the various MDAs during the course of implementing their programmes; but if that is not

happening, how do we go out to checkmate the activities of those MDAs? We are only talking based on maybe our own background or experiences we have got over the years, but not as Members of Parliament. So, we have to be serious with our oversight functions. You cannot give what you cannot monitor.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the narratives in this budget are very good, but if you go through it, those narratives are not translated in financial terms. I am saying this because if you look at how these resources are being utilised, you know exactly what I am talking about. The issue of the mudslide is discussed in this budget as something that hindered the gains we have been making. Honestly, we all know that the mudslide occurred in August this year. So, I want to state here that the Minister was not very honest in presenting that area. According to him, the mudslide was a hindering factor towards the progress we have made.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this country has a lot we need to focus on; i.e., the leakages and the wastages. Year in Year out in this House, we have enacted laws that lead to the creation of Commissions and Committees which need resources for their operations. For me, a lot of these Commissions and Committees could be merged together and resourced. There are some Commissions we are aware of that have few staff, but they pay billions of Leones as rent every year, but when you look at their operational cost, they do not have the needed resources at all. I think we need to have a rethink of what is happening in those Commissions. The Access to Information Commission, the Health Service Commission are few examples; very soon they would bring their budgets here. What I am saying is that if we can merge especially the functions they are undertaking and provide the needed resources, then we would see maybe better impact at the end of it all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have a lot in this country in terms of taxation, but people have lost interest in paying taxes, especially the local tax. What are the reasons? We know that people pay taxes because they want to see changes in their living conditions. I know that there are changes in some areas, but we are here representing our people and the people we are talking about are the SLPP or APC,

drawn from the North, South, East and West. We are talking about people in the rural areas and I want to state here that the bulk of them are in the rural areas. If you go to the Southern and Eastern parts of this country, you would realise that there is a huge increase in poverty. That is to say, poverty is increasing every day in the rural areas, especially in the Southern and Eastern parts of this country. Therefore, it is even challenging and Local Councils are not even attempting to collect local tax because they fear what they would explain to people if they go there. So, I am thinking that if they are not able to at least generate revenue, we cannot expand on the expenditure areas. What I would suggest here is for the Minister of Finance to think of creative ways we can use to do that. I think the idea of outsourcing some of these responsibilities, especially in the rural areas is very important. If we can outsource the collection of local tax, it will be better. Again, that goes with education because people want to know why they should pay taxes. If we can outsource, I think it would be better.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people have been talking about entrepreneurship in terms of diversification. Again, you have to be creative in doing that. Let me expose you to one untaxed area. This country is blessed and what we need to do is to open up and encourage creativity or innovation. The whole concept of entrepreneurship is talking about making it new. The tourism sector, which has been placed under that area, is very important. That area is untapped area. We have clean sand in this country, but that area has not been utilised at all. If we can rebrand and market our tourism in this area, honestly we would not need to even depend on our mining sector. Over the years, we have seen some improvements in that area, but as I said before, we can survive on this. We have seen mushrooming of guest houses and hotels, but they are owned by some people on that side of this House. That is very unfortunate for this country. So, if we can add flavour to that this country can live on just tourism. However, if you go to Lumley Beach today, all of us are happy with what is happening there. We only need to engage the owners of those businesses. They complain about electricity and water supply. With those businesses, tourists would want to come, but if they stay in Sierra Leone, it is far more expensive than The Gambia, for instance. So,

we have to work on those things rather than we reduce on production and that will lead to decrease in the prices. We have to improve on the tourism sector of this country. I always talk about domestic tourism and that is very good because it helps to create jobs for the youth. We have talented youth in this country who can do painting, art and craft, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the last year's budget, we talked about Sierra Leone brand, but how have we been able to actually market what we have. Again, in this year's budget, the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs is among the least; and yet we are talking about creating viable opportunities for economic growth. I would want to encourage all of us to focus on those two areas.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about the girl child education. Yes, we appreciate the fact that the Government is paying for the girl child, but the late disbursement of school subsidies to these schools is a problem. Therefore, indirectly we are undermining the support and the quality of education for girls. I would encourage that at least we have a rethink and do what is right. I thank you very much.

HON. MOHAMED JAWARA KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to make my humble contribution to this wonderful debate with the theme 'Strengthen Resilience for Inclusive Growth,' delivered by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Mr Momodu L. Kargbo. On behalf of the people of Constituency 100, I want to thank the Ministers and staff for preparing the 2018 Budget, prior to the commencement of the next financial year as it is stated in Section 22 of the Government Budget and Accountability Act, 2005.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister is here with us this afternoon and he is ready to listen to the debate. Therefore, as responsible Members of Parliament, we have the right to give our inputs because Parliament is purely in line with a motto. If you look at the Parliaments of Ghana, Nigeria and America, they are talking as one and the motto for this particular Parliament is 'esprit de corps' meaning that there is unity among Members of Parliament in and outside the Well of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2016, the Government budget was delivered by Dr Kelfala Marah with a theme 'Resilient Livelihood for Post Ebola Economy and Social Recovery.' During that period, wages and salaries were increased by **15%** and infrastructural projects were still ongoing. Let us look at the economy as far as the input is concerned. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I would like to take a look at the budget profile for the total revenue in 2017 to the tune of **Le 4.3tln** total revenue with expenditure to the tune of **6.2tln**. The deficit behind this budget is based on certain reasons. As a responsible Government, the deficit behind this is because of domestic borrowing and the exchange rate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the theme of the 2017 Budget was 'Strengthening Resilient for Inclusive Growth.' This is not surprising to this nation as far as development is concerned. The philosophy of the APC led Government is constructive nationalism. Based on the 2017 Budget with this particular philosophy, we can envisage better economic diversification, wherein agriculture is at the apex. In agriculture, we can have job creation facilities for the youth, contribute to food security and export. We also look at another pillar based on this particular budget, to scale up infrastructural development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind all and sundry that there is no room to criticise electricity because my colleague Honourable Member, Honourable Kelfala Conteh spoke about it yesterday.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, based on the scaling up infrastructural development, I want to point out one important area; i.e., roads. We all know that road construction is not a revenue generating project. It is purely a capital expenditure project. Based on this particular philosophy, there are certain towns and cities within this country you can boast of. There is no particular town that does not need road in this country. We all need good roads and this can create an enabling environment for better economic development in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in line with this particular budget, I would want to brand the 2018 Budget, using a Latin expression, 'Expectatam Desiree' and this means

a continuation. With the development and the strong leadership of Dr Samura Kamara and Honourable Deputy Speaker of this House, we are going to envisage a better Sierra Leone. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Minister and his team for bringing this very good budget to us. I want to start my contribution with a question that my colleague from Bo asked few hours ago. He asked about the benchmark that the Ministry or the Government is using to figure out things that are going in the country. I want to refer Honourable Members to the 2017 Financial Year. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I am talking about a benchmark the Honourable Member was talking about. The Minister spoke about the challenges in the retail of fuel prices. If you look at Page 21, Paragraph 101, the Minister said that the retail formula however is set in such a way that the excise duty is regularly adjusted in order to keep the retail price low and constant for the majority of users; i.e., the general public. He said that as a result of the continued adjustment of the excise duty, our price for retail fuel is by far the lowest in the sub-region. That is a benchmark the Government is using. And in Paragraph 102, he said that as international price for crude oil continues to rise, the excise duty has steadily reduced, reaching zero in May. That is also another benchmark. Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague from Moyamba, the Honourable James N.D. Alie asked so many questions about this budget. I am pretty sure that he knows the answers to most of those questions. And honestly, I think those are sarcastic questions that he asked and we should not tolerate sarcasm in this Well. He spoke about the Songo/Magbang Road and he rightly said that the contract was terminated in 2008 when the APC led Government came to power. This contract was awarded to a contractor who did nothing in that regard. Therefore, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma said that this contract should be terminated. It was terminated and awarded to a Portuguese contractor. Those contractors also did not do anything and that contract was also terminated. As we speak, the bidding process is ongoing for new bidders. For the information of the Honourable Member, that contract will be awarded to whosoever wins.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member also spoke about the ongoing rehabilitation at Fourah Bay College [FBC]. He said to this House that the renovation has been going on for the past ten years. That statement is not true because we approved the loan two years ago. If you use the FBC Road, you will find out that the renovation is presently ongoing. Again, the Honourable Member spoke about the Barefoot College which is located in my constituency. I want to inform him that the college is doing extremely well. This is because it is meant for women who have not been in any formal education sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to any Chiefdom and ask the Chiefs, they will tell you that every Chiefdom has been asked to submit a female to attend that college. They went there and were trained. In fact, they have graduated and they have been awarded their certificates. Therefore, the college is doing well. The moneys this Government has been allocating to that college are not going in vain at all. They have been properly utilised.

Yesterday, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my sister from Kailahun also spoke about this budget not being a good budget. She said that the Free Health Care is not working and the children are not being vaccinated. Those statements are not also true. I want to remind her that if the Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma provides the enabling environment for people to go to hospitals to vaccinate their children but failed to do so, you are going to be blamed and not H. E. Ernest Bai Koroma's Government. It is your responsibility to take your children to the hospitals. If other people are ceasing the opportunity to utilise those facilities, I do not see any reason why you failed to do so.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, she also said that Ministers are the ones benefitting from health facility abroad. I must tell my sister that my brother here is also benefitting and not only Ministers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring to the attention of Members of Parliament that when Honourable Bintu Myers was here, she was the Chairperson of Health Committee. When we went on oversight visit to Kambia District, we met about eight bundles of mosquito nets. Those nets were intercepted by the Kambia Police from

Kenema. Therefore, if the Government of Ernest Bai Koroma provided mosquito nets for the people of this country but those from Kenema are not using them, who should we blame? We are not going to allow that kind of blame at all. Why are you blaming the APC led Government for nothing?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to emphasise here that this is a very good budget because the Ministry of Finance has increased budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. In last year's budget, it was **9.3bln**, but it has been increased this year to **15.2bln**. I want to thank the Minister and his team for capacitating the Ministry of Local Government. The Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is a very big Ministry with nineteen [19] Local Councils. In fact, the number of Local Councils has been increased and we now have more Local and City Councils. I want to call on the Ministry and the Government to please increase it a little bit more because they have a lot of work to do. They should also have Commissioners in all the regional headquarters, offices and vehicles.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind the Government about the challenges the Local Councils are facing in the area of revenue collection. The parliamentary Committee on Local Government has been visiting these Councils and one of the main challenges of these Councils has been revenue collection. That has been a very big problem and that is why I want to urge the Government to ensure that these Councils are empowered with technical and advisory support.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister for committing himself to supporting these Councils in the area of revenue generation through property taxation. Our people in the provinces are not used to paying property taxes. They have been living there freely, but with the advice they will be receiving, I am sure they will do better.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much and I want to urge my colleagues to approve this Bill.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I have read the budget and the number of developments undertaken by this Government, both in the Agenda for Change and the Agenda for Prosperity are stated. Proposals have been made for the incoming Government, which I believe will be won by the SLPP. Eventually, we are going to see if the risk proposed in this budget and the possible solutions are tenable. A few things crossed my mind while I was reading this budget. These are things of keen interest to me and I would like to highlight them here. Since this Government came to power, road infrastructure has been their most trumpeted achievement. I must confirm that some strides have been made with regards to road infrastructure. The cost of those roads is another question.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to read something that is disturbing to me, particularly on Page 10, Paragraph 50. It says: **“Hardly, any district exists today in the country without a major road fully constructed.”** I want to say that Kenema District and its regional headquarter towns in the Eastern Region has benefitted little or nothing from these infrastructural developments. Kenema District has the worse road infrastructure in this country. All the roads are impassable, trunk roads for that matter and I have always maintained that it is deliberate by this Government. We have been ostracised and marginalised by this Government. What is more disturbing is the fact that whenever these senior Government officials go to Kenema District, they always make statements that do not represent them or resemble them. One of them said, S.O. 2 ‘u fɔɔn ɔ mi, are go fɔɔn ɔ u.’ That statement was unfortunate. Service delivery index should be equal. If you give Makeni one kilometre road, Kenema should have one kilometre. The money this Government is using is not their own. Every Sierra Leonean is equally entitled to it. We are equally contributing to the road users’ fund because when you buy one litre of fuel, you contribute to that particular fund. The Road Maintenance Fund is managing those funds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after a very hue and cry, the truck road; i.e., Blama/Hanga Road was contracted to a particular company called First Trycon for one year, but they have been on that road for over two years. I am a Member of the Works

Committee and when all the contractors were summoned here, they were very bold to say that they have been deprived of their funds. The Deputy Chairman of the Works Committee, Honourable Albert Deen Kamara, was in charge of that particular session. They were very bold to say that they were contracted but were deprived of funds. They are giving moneys to other contractors in other Districts, but leaving Kenema behind. What is taking me aback is the fact that a very senior Member of this House, the Deputy Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Honourable Hassan B. Sheriff of Port Loko, said that they went to Kenema to make roads, but we were indifference to development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to tell Members of the APC that there are people in Kenema who are APC members. Kenema is not just dominated by SLPP members, but you are depriving them. We are suffering the same fate because we are using the same roads. You are punishing Kenema because you think Kenema is SLPP's stronghold? The Deputy Minister of Finance is from Kenema District and he is APC. The Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business is from Kenema District. Why are you punishing us? So, I want to send a message to members of APC in Kenema District that they have been punished because we are all in the same situation. This Government has abandoned them and there is no need to vote for this Government any longer because of this situation.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kenema District has also been suffering from electricity. I would recall that from 2007 when this Government came to power, electricity was one of their development goals and we saw the Income-Electric saga. I was equally taken aback on Page 11, Paragraph 51. With leave of Mr Speaker, it states: **"Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, gone are the days when Freetown was referred to as the darkest city in West Africa and when Kabba Tiger generators ruled the day."** Somebody mentioned benchmark and this is very backward and un-progressive. You choose your benchmark on the activities of the past Government of the SLPP. You have been in power for almost ten years, but you failed to mention your benchmark. You were elected because people wanted you to do certain

things for them. We emerged from a war situation and we engaged in rehabilitation, resettlement, building of schools, etc. The priorities were not the same. You took over a country that was quite stable because there was no war or calamity. In that regard, your business was to embark on development. But you have always been referring to the SLPP Government as a Government that did nothing. If you want to compare development, you have to do with other developing countries in Africa instead referring to the SLPP. When you do that, it is not only un-progressive, but backward. The only thing you can tell me is the fact that huge sums of moneys have been pumped into the energy sector with epileptic electricity supply because we still have blackout all over the country. We have been very lucky up till now we are seated here we have not have power outage, but it used to happen even in this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, reference has been made to education. Of course we know that the educational sector is currently in a very big mess. There are examination malpractices everywhere. We have huge chunk of teachers who have not been approved and all this Government has been doing is to run after ghost teachers. We want them to tell us what is the status of employment of teachers or how many ghost teachers have they discovered? These are facts we need to know because in ten years, you have been running after ghost teachers without employing people we want to know. I thank you very much.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is extremely unfortunate when Members of Parliament who are expected to know governance issues are busy misleading the people of this country. I was expecting my colleague Member of Parliament to have done a thorough research on his submission. I want to refer him to the 2007 Budget, which was read in this Well in 2006. I am sure he was trying to say that our Government is bias and that is why the Kenema roads have not been constructed like the other roads. I will refer him to Paragraph 26 of 2007 Budget. It states: **"...under the Justice Sector Development Programme, Government has constructed wells in Bo, Moyamba and Pujehun Prisons."** Those developments were undertaken in the South. No water well was constructed in the

North. That just tells you how bias the SLPP Government was. For the APC led Government, he said that little is being done in Kenema. I am very happy because we did something for the people of Kenema. If much is not done, that is why the contract was awarded to one of you, but if it is not done at a pace it is expected, you blame him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member also misrepresented the facts when he was talking about electricity in this country. The Honourable Amadu Fofanah made a solid presentation yesterday when he was talking about electricity. The Honourable Kerifala Conteh also spoke about electricity. But if you want to make the best report, you have to make reference to the past. That is just the best practice. And whenever issues relating to electricity are discussed, we have to start with the SLPP. I would like to read Paragraph 70 of the 2016 Budget. It says" **"...currently, total output in Freetown is below 10megawatt."** That was just the installed capacity. What was really in use was below 5megawatts. And you said the demand, as at that time, was 40megawatts. Most of the twelve administrative districts had no operational power stations. The only districts that were enjoying constant supply of electricity at that time were Bo and Kenema districts, which they considered as their stronghold. However, those two districts are no longer their stronghold. Today, if you go to Magburaka, Lungi, Lunsar, Makeni, Kailahun, etc. you will see improvements. This tells you that our government is a government of national inclusion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Moyamba was asking about the lessons learnt in instituting the austerity measures. I am sure the Honourable Member from Makeni was very clear in his presentation on that issue. I want to take this opportunity to tell the people of this country and to educate my colleague Member of Parliament that in 2015, our economy contracted by **-21%**. With the institution of these economic measures, we were able to increase from **-21%** in 2015 to **4.2%** in 2016, with a projected growth of **4.9%** in 2018. That is an unprecedented growth, Mr Speaker. In other to translate this growth to what is happening to our economic activities, that is why this Government continues to pay salaries of workers in this

country on time. In 2007, teachers and other workers are paid two to three months of their arrears. In other words, what they owed them in September could only be paid maybe in January. We are paying our workers on time and this happens across the board. That is why we are building more hospitals than ever in the history of this country; that is why the Kenema roads, even though there are austerity measures, contracts were still being awarded for the construction of roads within Kenema City; and that is why this Government is ready to fund **70%** of the forthcoming elections. We all know that elections in this country were generally funded by our development partners, but we are going to break grounds under His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. We are bent on funding these elections by **70%**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Moyamba District said that the budget failed to mention the rehabilitation of the Moyamba and Moyamba Junction Roads. Let me refer him to annex 4 so as to clarify that issue. There is provision for the Moyamba/Shenge Road and funds have been provided for that purpose. Again, we also have the Magbele/Mabang Road, Moyamba Bridges, etc. All those roads are included in this Budget. Gone are the days when the Ministry of Finance is filled with mediocre. The current Ministry of Finance is filled with professionals and that is why I want to take this opportunity to commend the Minister of Finance. I am saying this because in the layout of this Budget, you will see professionalism being demonstrated and that is why I am commending the Minister of Finance. It was properly prepared and it is laid in line with international best practice. We want to commend the Minister of Finance for that and the APC led Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I find very disturbing was when the purported Agriculturist; i.e., the Honourable Member from Constituency 070, Honourable Mohamed Tholley and the Honourable Brima Conteh from Bonthe, said that nothing has been done by this Government for people of Tomabom and other areas. I know he was remembering their days when Agriculture was nothing to write home about. The Honourable Member from Tomabom could bear me witness that as I speak, we have over twenty thousand hectares of land being cultivated for rice production. If you go to

Magbass, where we just came from three days ago, there is five thousand hectares of land being cultivated. To show the growth rate, we inherited a yield of 0.7 per acre and we have been able to increase that to 3.5 for the first time in the History of this country. That tells you the growth in the Agriculture sector.

To conclude, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that much has been done in infrastructure because more roads have been built. On that note, the people of Tonkolili are ready to go the 'Tolongbo;' i.e., 'all for all' and 'APC for APC'. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. SAHR FATORMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start this debate with what the Honourable Member from Makeni said. He described this budget as business friendly. This statement is not only unfortunate, but is unwarranted provocation to the business people of this country. This is because in the 2007 Budget, the sum of **\$4.9bln** was allocated to Small and Medium Enterprises [SMEs] in all the fourteen political districts of this country. In this year's budget, there is no allocation for SMEs. The question is how can you say that this budget is business friendly?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer this House to Annex 7[b]. With all the supports we are getting from the Saudi Government, the sum of **\$2mln** was granted by the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank [SLCB] to support 2017 Hajj Scholarship Programme. The question is how many people benefited from that programme, Mr Minister? What is going to happen to the people that sold these tickets? As stated in annex 7[a], the external debt in 2016 was **\$1.2bln**, but it has increased to **\$1.4bln**. The domestic debt for 2016 was **Le3.3tln**. These figures are in the budget. I am giving this information to the people of this country for them to know that this Government succeeded the SLPP Government with **\$200mln** as reserve in the Bank of Sierra Leone and **Le557bln** in the Bank of Sierra Leone. As we speak, this Government has a debt to the tune of **Le4.4tln**. The domestic debt of this country for 2017 is more than the 2017 budget.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please take your time to make your points; and in doing so, you have to make reference and verification.

HON. SAHR FATORMA: Mr Speaker, this information is very important to the people of this country.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, but where did you get that from?

HON. SAHR FATORMA: It is in the budget, Mr Speaker and please check annex 7[a]. The external debt is **\$1.4bln** and the total domestic debt is **Le4.4tln**.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the domestic debt is in billion. Read the annex you have referred us. Honourable Member, do you know what is a trillion? Have you read the domestic debt?

HON. SAHR FATORMA: Yes, Mr Speaker. I have read it.

THE SPEAKER: Please proceed.

HON. SAHR FATORMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about roads. With your permission, Mr Speaker, I want to read Page 17, Paragraph 98 of the 2014 budget. It says: "Development partners including the European Union Commission, AFBD, IBDA and Kuwait Fund allocated **Le337.1mln** for the construction of Pendembu/Kailahun Road, Yeyi/Sefadu Road and the Yeyi/Sefadu Road has been completed. However, the Pendembu/Kailahun Road has not started. I want to know the reasons behind the delay in starting the Kailahun/Pendembu Road. This is a very serious situation and the people of Kailahun District are suffering. We do not have good roads and we do not know the whereabouts of the moneys allocated in 2014 for the construction of these roads. I want to state here that some roads have been constructed, but the Pendembu/Kailahun Road has not been constructed. I really want to know why the delay in the commencement of that road. Are you going to wait till March, 2018 to use those moneys for your campaign? This time around we will tell the people of Kailahun District not to vote for you and we will not even allow any Member of Parliament from that district.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Leader of this House said yesterday that the Goods and Services Tax [GST] has been increased because businesses are growing

in this country. This statement is not true. The GST is growing because of the huge taxation you have imposed on the business community in this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thank you very much. The GST is still the same and this House has not made any changes.

HON. IBRAHIM MARTIN BANGURA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this budget, presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Development. The first thing I would like to mention here is that my colleague from Kailahun said that in 2006 Sierra Leone was free from external debt. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I would like to quote from the 2007 Budget. It says: **“Mr Speaker, Sierra Leone stuck of disbursement outstanding debt stood at \$1.72bln as at the end of 2006.”** Comparatively, the 2018 Budget states: **“The stuck of external public debt stood at \$1.4Bln.”** With all what we have done in building roads, electricity, Agriculture, Health, etc. we still reduced the external debt to that amount. So, this tells you that our financial activity as a government is prudent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague from Bo, Honourable Mohamed Tholley was talking about unemployment. He is not in the Chambers currently, but I want to inform this Honourable House that in my own Constituency, in the Constituency of Honourable Ibrahim B. Kargbo and that of the Honourable Mohamed Kamara, about 1800 young people have been employed. These young people are working and it will also surprise you to know that this Government is very serious about unemployment issues in country. The grass we have been burning is now providing energy for us through ADDAX. As we speak, I have employed 200 people to harvest grass for the Company. So, this is to tell you that we have individual and collective responsibility to our people. For example, if you failed to use your initiative as a Member of Parliament; your connection and resources to provide jobs for your people, they will not vote for you again.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, still on the issue of unemployment, in tandem with entrepreneurship, this Government has encouraged young people like myself because of its commitment to entrepreneurship. I stand here as a business man, employing over

seven hundred people. I am now contributing to this budget by paying the 'pay-as-you-earn' [PAYE] for young people. I am ensuring the livelihood of the young people in that part of the country. I saw my colleague on the other side on Monday, when I was coming from Kenema. I want to inform him that I have employed people from Kenema and I want to also tell him that they will not vote for him because he has not given them employment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have a responsibility as Sierra Leoneans and one of the responsibilities is to encourage our constituents to pay taxes, so that we meet the targets being set in this budget. This is very important and the Honourable Frank kposowa talked about the Local Content Policy in relation to the Cement Factory in this country. I have been a contractor and whenever I send vehicles to LEOCEM for cement supply, it used to take four to five days before they are supplied. However, with the help of these foreign companies, that challenge has been resolved. This is simple economics because when many goods chase the few available suppliers, you have a deflation. In other words, the price comes down. Mr Speaker, I want to inform my colleague from Kenema that resources are allocated equitably. There are many factors you considered before you allocate resources and that is what this government is doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Agriculture. Mr Speaker, I was fortunate to be with the team that went to Magbass as a practical farmer and if the Ministry of Finance could provide resources to the Ministry of Agriculture in the not too distance future, believe you me we will feed ourselves. My only plea to the Minister of Agriculture is to replicate the idea of Magbas to some districts. If we can do that as a nation, then I think the issue of food shortage will be addressed. This is because if you go to the budget, one of the key issues mentioned is that most of our foreign reserve is being directed to the importation of rice. It is sad to note here that about **\$108mln** is spent in the first half for the importation of rice. However, if all of us put our hands and support to Agriculture as I am presently doing, rice importation will be reduced.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that I bought two tractors last year and I provided two hundred bushels of rice and two hundred and fifty

bushels of groundnuts. I did the work without taking a cent from anybody. The Honourable Member from Malal is a witness. I am paying taxes to government and I have evidence to prove me right.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have to take responsibility in building our roads. We have engineers in this country, but they have not been able to come together to form a company. It is not prudent to award contracts to foreign companies like the CSC and others to construct our feed roads. I will be advertising for engineers very soon. I am going to build a road construction company by next year and it will be operational. I have all what it takes to do that for the people of Sierra Leone. This is how we should develop this country. We should not live everything to government. We have to use our initiatives and resources to improve the lives of our people. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have my own reference point, which is the 2005 and 2006 budgets. In the 2006 Budget, sometimes I wonder why colleagues from the other side continue to talk about corruption. Today, they are talking about corruption after they succeeded in siphoning the people's money. In fact, they usually planned their Budget in a tricky way, so as to take the money from the people. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I would like to read Page 13 of the 2006 Budget. It says: **"Corruption impedes economic growth, limits the amount of resources that reached those on the ground..."** The government then was admitting the fact that corruption was at its peak. In 2005, a total of fifty corruption cases were investigated. The question is out of those fifty cases investigated, what happened next? Twenty-two of them were referred to court and seven were convicted. Out of fifty corruption cases, only seven were convicted. This is absurd. And that is indeed how serious corruption was striving under the SLPP regime.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am coming from a very remote and deprived Constituency, Krubola. In the SLPP budget, it is indicated that **99%** of the road from Koidu to Krubola has been completed; and during that period, you cannot use any

vehicle to access Krubola. If I can borrow from the Honourable Sahr Fatorma words, they 'chopped money.' Somebody was talking about the de-amalgamation. Sometimes when people criticise the concept of the de-amalgamation, they do not have sympathy. Maybe they do not know what my constituency was going through. This is because if you want to access the districts headquarter towns from my constituency, you have to walk on terrible roads for over 110 miles. And because you cannot access the district headquarter towns, a lot of things were happening in my constituency that were not reported; i.e., human rights abuses. However, we want to particularly thank this Government and His Excellency the President, for taking that bold step to divide Koinadugu District into two; i.e., Koinadugu and Falaba district. Again, the de-amalgamation exercise is another commendable venture. Nobody, in his right senses, will talk against that. If you do, it means you do not have the interest of the people at heart. Today, instead of walking 110 miles to access Kabala District headquarter town, it has been shortened to 36 miles. Is that not a commendable effort for the people in my constituency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about roads. Honourable Sahr Fatorma was talking about putting the roads on document. Honourable Members, if what I am about to say is wrong, please say no or yes if it is correct. This is the 2005 Budget and if we are to go by what he was saying, it simply means that most of the activities highlighted in that document were completed in 2006. According to 2005 Budget, the Makeni/Matotoka Road was done. Is that correct? This is in the 2005 Budget, under annex 3[a]. Again, the Freetown/Monrovia Road was completed. Is that correct? The answer is no. What are you talking about roads? The number of roads we have now are far better than what we used to have. The 2005 Budget also stated that the Freetown/Pamelap Road was done by them. Is that correct? The answer is no.

Mind you, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the 2005 Budget we are talking about and was expected to have been implemented in 2006, when the SLPP was still in governance, but nothing was done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if this country inherited a very good foundation, as they are claiming now, Sierra Leone would have been a paradise country. This is because after the war, huge sums of moneys came into this country. Those moneys were mentioned and planned for, but the use of those resources was not visible. Let me borrow another word from Honourable Sheku Sannoh. He said that if you go to China House, they would say serve me the party colour. That was what used to happen with our moneys; i.e., taking the party for the green bottle at China House. In 2006, the total amount of grants that came to this country was **Le375.4bln** and **Le79.6bln** in 2007. Money was flowing into this country during the SLPP regime. Presently, we are receiving little or nothing. We should have inherited an economy with good roads and the Wilkinson Road should have been completed and even Kabala/Krubola Road. What are these people talking about economic development?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a simple question for the citizens of this country. Do you want to go back to the days of 2006, 2005 and 2004? I guess you do not want that to happen at all. Look at what His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has done for us. I want to emphasise here that we should continue 'Tolongbo' without turning back.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my constituency and the new Falaba District, we want to appreciate His Excellency the President. I have one of the best hospitals in this country. Somebody was talking about the health system. There was no foundation left behind by the SLPP Government. We are now putting the right structures in place and the administrative aspect. Today, we have a very good hospital built for my people and that is indeed commendable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area is the road. I want to thank God because we have a very good contractor and we are proud of him. He is a very good contractor and we do believe that the Local Content Policy is being promoted. I want to thank His Excellency the President for that for the creation of two districts in Koinadugu. Again, the Chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Works, Honourable Kombor Kamara is doing a fantastic job. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. LEORNARD S. FOFANAH [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Honourable Members, we are all aware that tomorrow is the final day for the budget debates. I will request Honourable Members to bring the Cargo Tracking System Agreement, dated 27th November, 2014. We are going to make an addendum to that Agreement tomorrow. So, I want you to read the addendum in consonance with the existing Agreement. I am requesting all Members of Parliament to look on your shelves and bring the original Agreement, dated 27th November, 2014.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Chairman of Finance Committee, regarding this announcement, I have been saying it times without number that the Committee Clerks should communicate to Committee Members. I am sure not all Members of the Finance Committee are in the Chamber. It is more effective when they communicate directly to the Members. These announcements take more time in the Chambers. It is better for us to be using the clerks to inform members of their respective Committees rather than making these announcements here. We would be stopping them in future.

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: On behalf of the Female Parliamentary Caucus, I would like to invite all of you upstairs for refreshment in appreciation of the Deputy Speaker being appointed as the Running Mate for APC.

THE SPEAKER: Why only the Female Parliamentary Caucus? What about the Male Caucus?

HON. NAVO KAIKAI: We want to show that we are capable of doing things without the support of men. So, this is being organised solely by the Female Caucus of Parliament. The Minister is invited and the Press.

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is good news. In the Pan-African Parliament, we have established the Pan-African Parliamentary Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition. I am the President of that Alliance, but that is not the good news. The good news is that we have signed a technical cooperation project with the Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO] for two years in the range of about **\$400,000**. Four pilot countries have been approved and being the President,

Sierra Leone Parliament is among those four countries. This means that for the next two years, the project will be operating. As a preparation for that project, we should establish the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition in this Parliament, not under the Committee on Agriculture. It is a voluntary membership of people who are committed to Food Security and Nutrition in Sierra Leone. We will call a meeting next week, so that we start the discussion on the establishment of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition. We are going to put an executive together for that purpose. I know that I will not be in this Parliament next year, but it is important that I leave a legacy that will continue even when I have left as a Member of Parliament. Therefore, I am calling on all interested members, so that we establish the Executive. We should start putting the structures in place before 2018. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Madam Minority Leader and thank you for the good news as well.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 3:00 p.m. and was adjourned to Friday, 3rd November, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.]