

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

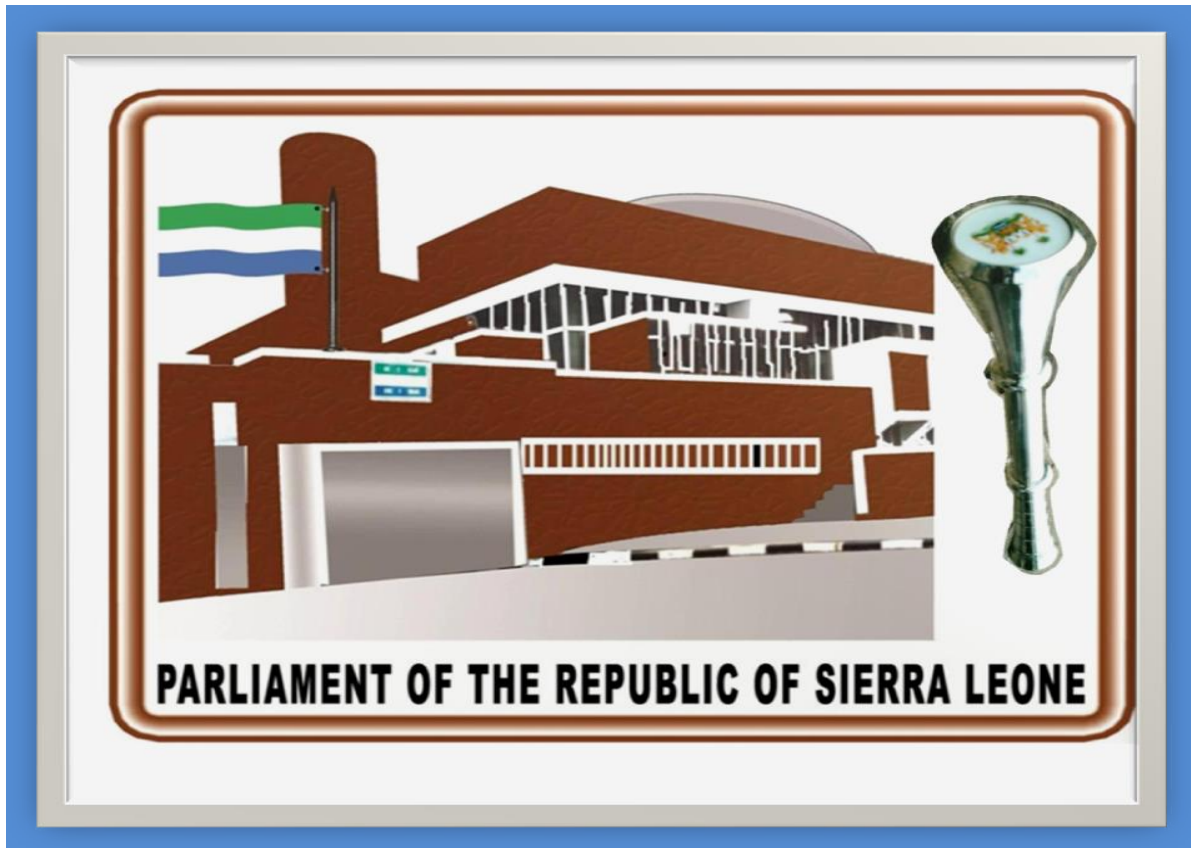
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION - SECOND MEETING**

**FRIDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020**

*SESSION – 2019/2020*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

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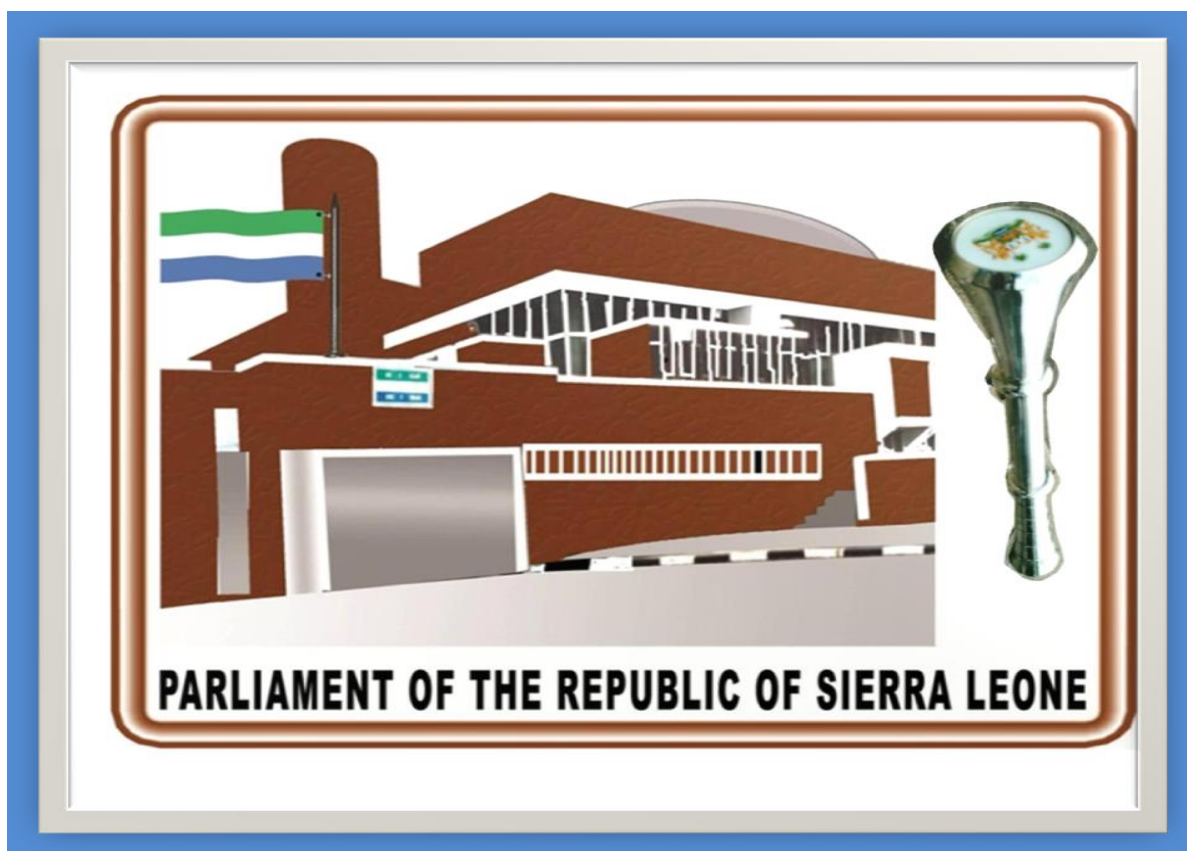
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: II**

**NUMBER: 40**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.

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PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE TWELFTH REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED  
BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED  
THEREIN BE APPROVED.

### **IV. LAYING OF PAPERS**

DR PATRICIA N. LAVERLEY

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE, THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT  
REGULATIONS 2020



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

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

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### **SECOND SESSION – SECOND MEETING OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2020.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

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

*[The House met at 10:20 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

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

The House was called to Order

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

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, do we have a quorum?

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** We have a quorum, Mr Speaker.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must first of all commend you for adjusting the time. You have done your best, but it seems as if Members are not adhering to your directives. As we speak, you are not sure if we have a quorum, and that is a concern to this nation. According to the President, this year is a year of delivery, but how can we deliver when Members of Parliament do not come to Parliament on time? I am saying this over and over again that we need to support the Government to deliver on its promises. We will not deliver as promised if we do not come and deliberate on issues affecting the progress of this country. I do not want to move a counter Motion, but I have the right to move it against the suspension of S.Os. 5[2]. I will not do it now, but I would like to plead with you to exercise your powers and ensure that your directives are complied with. Failing which, I will have no option, but to start moving a Motion against suspension.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank You, Honourable Member.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, my mind is always in sync with yours, but let me start with you Honourable Member. Where are your colleagues on your front row?

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, I am addressing the issue as a Member of Parliament and it is not whether on that side or this side. I am addressing you on what is supposed to be done as Members of Parliament. We are supposed to live by example.

**THE SPEAKER:** But implicit of what you have said is that there must be people who must demonstrate leadership and the leaders of this House should demonstrate leadership.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Exactly, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** That was why I asked for those occupying the front seats.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker that is not the issue now.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is part of the issue, Honourable Member.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** The front row is not the issue. The issue is the leadership of Parliament and the leadership in this context is the Speaker. You have all the powers to do the needful and stop capitalising on the absence of those occupying the front Bench. As far as I am concerned, there is no front or back Bench here.

**THE SPEAKER:** You have made your point, Honourable Member and on a similar note, I will ask the Deputy Chief Whip to look behind him.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** I have done that, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Have you seen the number of empty seats?

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Yes, Mr Speaker. The seats are empty.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope you remembered yesterday's meeting.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** I do, Mr Speaker. The Honourable Daniel B. Koroma said he was not sure whether we had a quorum. You also asked me and the Leader of Government Business and if we had a quorum. We told you that we had a quorum.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am sure that is not the issue. I have been assured that we have a quorum.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** We have a quorum, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Based on that, we shall proceed.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, we now have a quorum and we can proceed.

**THE SPEAKER:** There is a Motion on the Floor and I need a seconder?

**HON. MOSES B. JORKIE:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed Put and Agreed to]*

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to amend the Order Paper to read, instead of item III being 'Motion of the Committee on Appointments, it should be Continued Debate Briefing on Coronavirus National

Preparedness. And we would have [4] which is the Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. Again, the seconder of that Motion is Honourable Mathew S. Nyuma and not Honourable Sahr Charles. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I am inviting the Leader of Government Business and the Leader of the Opposition to please come forward.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, you requested my presence, but I want to know the reasons.

**THE SPEAKER:** I did because your seat was empty. Honourable Members, please take your seats.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** I am not going to enquire what was going on there because it was a friendly encounter.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, this is Parliament and after that short consultation, I want to plead with the Leader of Government Business for us to revisit and readjust the today's proceedings.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Honourable Member, please explain how.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** In that case, Mr Speaker, we should start with item III, which has to do with the Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, that will be the Order Paper.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** No, it is by consensus.

## **II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY, 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2020**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? If



there is no correction or amendment, would someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 as presented?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. MOSES B. JORKIE:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 has been adopted as presented]*

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

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Twelfth Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service:

#### *1. Introduction*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is responsible for vetting presidential nominees and selecting the most fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices met on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and interviewed five presidential nominees for appointments to the following positions:

[i] Inspector-General of Police;

[ii] Executive Chairman, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency [EPA];

[iii] Two Members, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency; and

[vi] Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Local Content Agency.

## *2. Procedure*

The Committee conducted the hearing within the ambit of its established criteria and:

- [i] requested for public inputs into the vetting process to ascertain the suitability of the nominees for their proposed Appointments;
- [ii] requested for reliable and specified documents to be provided by the nominees pertaining to their backgrounds and other related matters;
- [iii] ensured that the nominees were cleared of any criminal record by the Criminal Investigation Department of the Sierra Leone police; and
- [iv] ensured that each nominee has the relevant qualification and necessary backup experience to hold his/her proposed appointment.

Probing questions put to the nominees covered wide ranging issues pertaining to their track records in other pertinent work situations, their declared assets and liabilities, fulfilment of their tax obligations and their visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were closely looked into by the Committee.

## *3. Thirteenth Sitting of the Committee on Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2020*

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

### *[i] Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula, proposed Inspector General of Police*

Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula is an Assistant Inspector General of Police. He joined the Sierra Leone Police Force in 1980 and through hard work, he rose through the ranks to his current position. To improve on his competence, he obtained a Master Degree in Peace and Development Studies which greatly helped him to make meaningful contributions towards the development of the Sierra Leone Police Force. Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula is a result oriented officer who has served with excellence in all the regions of Sierra Leone.

Responding to the Committee's inquiries, Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula said that he will adopt strategies that would create a reform situation to better enhance the image of the Police Force. **"I will engage people order than coerce them, and would settle differences amicably without hindrance,"** he said. On the issue of pending

elections, Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula promised to create a level playing ground for everybody's rights to prevail.

Questioned on the issue of requests for peaceful demonstration, he agreed with the Committee that people have a right to demonstrate. **"We invite people requesting to demonstrate to come for a dialogue with us because we believe their intensions are genuine. There are however, some people that are out to create mayhem and wreak havoc on the State. That is why we ask people to apply and come for a dialogue. I assure you that we will continue to allow people to demonstrate peacefully. We will police and guide them once we have had dialogue with them and agreed on the ground rules to observe, that we will not undermine the security of the State."**

Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula assured the Committee that, "if I obtain the blessings of approval by Honourable Members, I will discharge my duties with the fear of God in me. If there should be discipline in the police, it must start with me. I must be disciplined and ensure that my discipline filters down to the lower ranks," he said.

*[ii] Dr Bondi Gevao, proposed Chairman, Board of Directors, Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]*

Dr Bondi Gevao is an Environmental Organic Chemist with a wealth of experience and expertise in Analytical Techniques for measuring contaminants in the environment. He has a wide range of research experience at different levels and is presently a Senior Research Scientist, steering research to provide Scientific Evidence for assessing the effectiveness of international efforts to minimise the release of POP Chemicals in the West-Asian Environment. Dr Bondi Gevao has over forty publications to his credit in leading, internationally recognized, Peer-reviewed journals in the field of environmental sciences.

Answering to probing questions, Dr Bondi Gevao said that he was happy that his colleague and former Head of the EPA, is now the Minister of Environment. He has laid down the foundation for me to build upon. There are lots of environmental challenges

that we are faced with. Trees are being cut down at an alarming rate, there is a drive to protect catchment areas so that we can preserve our forests and make sure that we have enough water for the growing population of Freetown, illegal mining in the provinces and the like.

He promised bringing to the EPA innovative technology to monitor the Environment by using robotic drones to try and see things from the Air, so that even the people who are mining illegally could be observed from the Air. Furthermore, the erudite Environmentalist added that he would steer the Agency towards generating good quality scientific data on the basis of which policies could be made by the Minister. "I do not see myself being in conflict with the Minister, we would work together, because we have been colleagues and have a common agenda," he assured the Committee.

[iii] Mr Zainu Deen-Karim, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Local Content Agency

Mr Zainu Deen Karim is a Chartered Certified Accountants [ACCA] with a wealth of work experience. He has worked in different capacities for many organisations as Head of Finance, Accountant, Management Accountant, etc.

Reacting to the Committee's question on his honesty and performance, Mr Zainu Deen-Karim said: **"I have been known for my honesty and hard work. I am a performer, and I assure this House that, if approved, I will perform to the best of my ability and do the young people of this nation proud. Together with other Board members, we will make this Agency a very enviable one and will instil confidence in the minds of Sierra Leoneans to go for our local products. We would also be coming up with innovative ideas that will enhance the rapid development of the Agency."**

[iv] Dr Abdul Jalloh, Member, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency

Dr Abdul Jalloh is a trained Medical Specialist in Psychiatry. He is the Superintendent, in the Psychiatric Hospital, Kissy, Freetown. He has been involved in leadership, mentoring and monitoring Medical, Pharmacy, Nursing and Medical Laboratory science at both

undergraduate and postgraduate levels. He is the National Coordinator, international consortium of Universities on Drug Demand Reduction.

Answering to the Committee's inquiries, Dr Abdul Jalloh said: **"As a Psychiatric, combating drug use is one of my expertise. I have been working in the field of mental health for quite a while now and as Head of the only Psychiatric Teaching Hospital, I have lots of cases that are due to substance usage. I have been doing my best to manage, rehabilitate, raise awareness, and educate people, especially the young concerning the adverse effects of substance use."**

*[v] Lt Col [Rtd] Samuel Erasmus Tucker, Member, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency*

Lt Col [Rtd] Samuel Erasmus Tucker is a retired Military Officer who joined the army in 1963, rose through the ranks and was retired in 1994. He has vast military experience and has the unique ability to quickly learn about people, places and cultures.

Responding to the concerns of the Committee, Lt Col [Rtd] Samuel Erasmus Tucker said drug issues were critical, **"but as a disciplined man, I will collaborate with the other members of the Agency to do everything within our powers to ensure that laws made against drugs issue are enforced. In Sierra Leone, we have the laws, but the major challenge we normally face is the enforcement of those laws. With the support of this Honourable House and other partners, the Agency will do everything in its power to enforce the law and I will be going to the Board with determination to ensure that the objectives of the Agencies are achieved."**

#### *4. Recommendation[s]*

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

[i] Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula, Inspector General of Police;

[ii] Dr Bondi Gevao, Executive Chairman, Board of Directors, Environment Protection Agency [EPA];

[iii] Dr Abdul Jalloh, Member, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency;

[iv] Mr Zainu Deen-Karim, Member, Board of Directors Sierra Leone Local Content Agency; and

[v] Lt Col *[Rtd]* Samuel Erasmus Tucker, Member, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Thirteenth Report is the unanimous view of the Committee. I therefore move that the Thirteenth Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Leader of Government Business for that presentation.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 34. I just wanted to recommend to colleagues that we still have the Coronavirus issue to deliberate on today and we have kept the ministers and others since yesterday. So, I wanted to suggest that we limit the number of contributors because we do not want the praise singing here this morning. I crave the indulgence of colleagues through their leaders to be very brief, so that we can discuss the Coronavirus issue *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** We have a Motion on the Floor and I need a seconder?

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, what is the Motion? I have not heard about any Motion.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** I can move a Motion, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Motion on the Floor is the one moved by the Leader of Government Business 'that the Twelfth Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.' This is the Motion moved by the Leader of Government Business.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope we can limit the length of the debate we are going to entertain on this Motion for the very reason provided by Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella. He has reminded us that we have an on-going debate which started yesterday. He said we have invited ministers and Heads of Departments to come and listen and they are here again today. I made it quite clear that the said debate would continue today and would be brought to closure. So, I will only ask few people to contribute because we know exactly what they are going to say. I am not going to entertain repetition of what one person has already said. I would start with the seconder.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would also like to thank His Excellency the President for nominating fine Sierra Leoneans to be approved by this House for the various positions. I am not intending to praise sing, but I want to tell you about some of the people we have in front of us. Mr Speaker, because the good work of Nelson Mandela, I read a book titled, 'The Portrait of an Extraordinary Man.' Perhaps, for the proposed IG, we cannot say the 'Portrait of an Extraordinary Man,' but the symbol of a very good policing; that is the proposed IG we have in front of us *[Applause]*. I am sure one must carry the symbol of faith, truth and sincerity and the proposed IG has served this country with faith, sincerity and truth, this is why the President has the honour to give us this fine gentleman to continue to serve us. I am certain that he has displayed steadfastness and humility for the past years in the Police Force.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are accusations against the police force, but I believe he is ready to change the narratives. The public is blaming the police for being corrupt and I asked him a question relating to corruption yesterday. I said: **"I do not know if it is a symbol of classification or people like to say the police are corrupt, but you need to change the narratives."** He said: "I will start with my very self, I have to be disciplined, corrupt free, and formulate and implement good policies. Honourable Members, I do not want to continue praising this man, but he has

done well and he is ready to do more for this country *[Applause]*. When the Leader of Government Business was reading the report, the concluding paragraph says 'the Report is the unanimous view of the Committee,' the Committee comprises of the APC, SLPP, C4C, Independent Candidates, NGC and Paramount Chief Members of Parliament. I asked the propose IG on what innovations he would bring to the police force if this House approved his nomination. He said: **"I have the fear of God and I am on oath, and if you are on oath, you will serve your people and not personal interest. You have to spread your authority without fear or favour"** *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am certain that it is not only about democracy, but it is also about good policy and good security. Good security policies are also ingredients of good governance. The police force has always been labelled as corrupt and very indisciplined. I want to ask the proposed IG to change the narratives and change the entire story to something good. This is the 'New Direction' and the 'New Direction' is the right direction. We have not given you the position to praise you, but for you to perform. Mr Speaker, Section 61 of the Constitution gives the President the power to create offices and terminate such offices if he deems it fit. In Part 2 of Sub-Section 53 of the 1991 Constitution, the President also has the fundamental right to hire and fire. Today, it pleases the President to appoint all of you, but it also pleases the President to fire you because he has the 'Executive Powers' to do so.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are faced with a lot of environmental issues in this country. We believe it is not about the name, but about the knowledge you have and how you will discharge your duties. You will agree with me that people are cutting down trees to burn charcoal and this practice is all over the country. We believe that the laws we have passed in this Parliament should be enforced to the latter. You will also agree with me that enforcement is our key and it has been a problem in our governance system and that is why we are ranked 4<sup>th</sup> globally as disaster prone country. I am sure the proposed IG will be approved by this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have Mr Bondi Gevao as a very good environmentalist. I want the proposed nominees to the EPA to work with the police, so



as to enforce the available laws. You will agree with me that the laws are there, but how do we enforce the laws? This is what we are looking for, Mr Speaker. There are many complaints not only this year, but also the previous years. We want these laws to be implemented, so that our people are protected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Zainu Deen-Karim, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Local Content Agency, is an Accountant with ACCA qualifications. He is a good gentleman and he has performed before very well. It is based on your performance that the President has added another responsibility on you and we expect you to deliver without fear or favour. Please defend Sierra Leone and the people of this country. You said that the 'New Direction' is the right direction and we are not expecting you to dwell on the past. This appointment is not for you to make complaints, but to deliver. Service delivery is what we are looking for at this time. My humble request is to ask this Honourable House to approve your nomination, so that you can go and do your work. Please serve this nation without fear or favour. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker and bless us all *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Hindolo M. Gevao, do you think it is a coincidence in the name? I would ask that you be the last person to speak.

**HON. OSMAN A. CHARLES:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here again to approve presidential nominees whom we think are fine Sierra Leoneans. As we always say in this House, 'these gentlemen are fine Sierra Leoneans.' If you look at their résumés and the Report just presented to us, I have the conviction that these gentlemen will perform because there is no room for excuses in the 'New Direction.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will talk about Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula, Inspector General of Police. He is my constituent and his nomination did not come from the blues, but after careful consideration by His Excellency the President. Sometimes it is good to give praises where praises are due, Mr Speaker. As we have heard from the previous speaker, Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula went through the ranks and file of the police force. I am sure he encountered challenges in the course of discharging his

functions, but he stood firm and worked diligently. When he was asked yesterday, he said he would discharge his duties with the fear of God. This means he is God-fearing and he just came back from Rome recently. He went there to pray and to see the Pope. He has the fear of God and that is what we want in this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whatever we may say about Mr Ambrose Michael Sovula, he deserves what he is going to achieve. On behalf of the people of Constituency 079, I want to congratulate the proposed IG in advance and to thank the President for just doing justice to the people of Constituency 079 *[Applause]*. On that note, I want to urge this House to speedily approve these gentlemen. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I hope the rest of you wishing to catch my eye will follow his fine example. Brevity is the soul of wit. I call on Honourable Abdul Kargbo to make his contribution.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank God for this opportunity to add my voice to this debate. We are here to look at various personalities nominated to this House by the President. I want to firstly of all unhesitatingly state here that I have met Dr Abdul Jalloh several years back when we formed an organisation called 'Think Salone.' He has the interest of this country at heart and I had the privilege of sharing a podium with him at IPAM to sensitise the students on the effects of taking drugs. I know he is a fine personality, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the nomination of the IG. An American novelist and a poet, Josiah Gilbert Holland composed a prayer that is still lingering in my mind. With the leave of Mr Speaker, it says: **"Oh God, give us men, the time demands strong mind, great hearts, true faith, willing hands, men whom the lust of office would not kill, men whom the spoils of office cannot buy, men who possess opinion and will, men with honour and men who would not lie."** At a very crucial time of our history, I think as a nation, we need these men to serve in various capacities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that human beings by nature have the tendency to be corrupt because we want to satisfy our unmitigated selfishness and absolute rapacity. However, it is sacrosanct in Chapter 2 of Act No.6 of the 1991 Constitution that there are fundamental principles of the State and Sub-Section 1 of Section 115 talks about the establishment of the Sierra Leone Police. As an independent institution, the Police should not be remote controlled by any Arm of Government *[Applause]*. Government consists of the Judiciary, Legislature and the Executive Arm of Government. These three Arms of Government should be seen working in the interest of the State.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that if a Member of Parliament takes bribe to make bad law, he is in the Legislative Arm and he is not working in the interest of the State. If a Minister of Government does something that is not in the interest of the State, he is a member of the Executive Arm and he/she is not working in the interest of the State. This is why the Constitution was deliberately promulgated to dictate the mode of operations of independent State institutions not to be remote controlled by any Arm of Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the problem of this nation is the independence of the police *[Applause]*. I can say it with confidence, alacrity and precision that the police has contributed immensely to the insecurity of this country. Mr Speaker, what is disturbing this country is the time we should spend thinking about how our nation should progress. I am sure we spend most of our precious time praise singing without offering solutions for the betterment of this country. I am saying this because it is possible for the young ones to superintend over the affairs of this State in the future. S.Os. [2] 'da goat wae u get for tot, nor wait tay e doti bifo u tot am.' Mr Speaker, State institutions are not independent and that is creating more problems and insecurity in Sierra Leone. This is why the security of this country is very cumbersome.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the tenure of the former Inspector-General of Police, there were lots of things he did that were not correct. When he was the IG, any Government official would call him to carry out an assignment and he usually

succumbed, even when he knew it was not his responsibility. Most of the things they did were not correct, and it is not within the purview of their mandate *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Kabala and Mile 91 incidents are still fresh in our minds. I want to briefly explained what happened in my presence. I am a living testament to what I am about to tell this House. During the elections in Constituency 110, the current nominee, Mr Ambrose Sovula was the AIG and he was present. Mr Speaker, I was there. It was in his presence civilians were destroying ballot boxes; it was in his presence police officers were protecting those civilians because their views were in sync with those who are in offices now. It will interest you to know that none of the culprits were arrested and brought to book. Mr Speaker, I was the one arrested. I am sure there are procedures to be followed before you can arrest a Member of Parliament and one of the procedures is to first of all invoke my immunities by the Speaker of Parliament. Nobody informed him before my arrest and I want to use this opportunity to graciously thank the Speaker and the Clerk of Parliament for what they did. You protected me and this institution regardless of the party I belong to. These are the people we need to redeem Sierra Leone. I thank all Members of Parliament, both Ruling and Opposition for their relentless effort. Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh almost slept with me there at the CID.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, when I was arrested by the police, a police officer said: **"Honourable Abdul Kargbo, we are going to ensure that you keep quiet in the Well of Parliament."** I want to make this clear to all and sundry that Honourable Abdul Kargbo was not elected to come and keep quiet in Parliament, I was elected to represent my people.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Abdul Kargbo.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** You need not belabour the point. If your silence was predicted, that prediction has come to naught because nobody has silenced you and you are here speaking.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I will implore you to round up.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** On that note, I want to make this clear that the only time Abdul Kargbo will keep quiet in this Parliament is when my corpse is laid at State Hall. I pray that we will come to that time as a nation when people will begin to respect their offices than the position they hold.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was mobbed and attacked. I was slapped and kicked by a young man who was seated over there, but I am sure he has gone outside. His name is Sannoh and he works at the SLRA. He is a very young man. I told him that we have more days to live. When I went home, I was going through my album back in our University days and I saw a picture I took with him. I tore the picture because I did not want to see him with me anymore. I have forgiven him, but we should take note of the fact that what has happened to me could happen to anyone of you tomorrow. You would agree with me that no one party will be in opposition for ever. I have presented my case and I hope to benefit out of the exercise of the discretion of the Honourable Members and the Speaker. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I am afraid, but I now have the unpleasant duty of limiting the length of speeches because we have an unfinished business. I will recognise the Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh *[Applause]*.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to use this opportunity to remind myself and to thank the Honourable Abdul Kargbo of Constituency 077 for reminding me of the ordeals I passed through in the hands of the Sierra Leone police under the APC. Mr Speaker, I was attacked at Kaningo after the 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2018 elections; and by extension I was already an elected Member of Pwiliwment for Constituency 132. I was severely beaten and I am still carrying the marks left on me by the APC. It is unpalatable for someone to be reminded of the high handedness of the police who were trained and left behind by the APC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was internally displaced in this country, after being elected Member of Parliament. I was moving from one place to the other, seeking refuge because I wanted to hide from the clutches of the APC. I did not want to be assassinated. The LUC at the time was Mr Shyllon, who was a Reverend like my Honourable colleague. He tried to set me up, but he failed. He assigned a police officer to me, not knowing that that police officer was meant to bring me down. He was relaying every information to the then LUC. The LUC and others set up the attack and I was attacked and beaten. They brought former RUF juntas, Biyor and Adams to assassinate me. They even went with a pistol to assassinate me because they did not want the SLPP to win Constituency 132 *[Applause]*. Well, the good news is that I am here today to narrate my ordeals to this Honourable House. I am here in green and white, looking pleasantly strong, filled with alacrity and temerity to say the proposed IG is an epitome of leadership *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the former Chairman and Leader of the SLPP used to say the 'Crank-courage leadership.' There is no better person whose nature the Almighty God has built with very special aesthetic characteristics, like the proposed IG of the Sierra Leone Police. Mr Speaker, this is no hearsay because I have worked with him when he was the AIG Regional West. He had an office situated in my Constituency, Constituency 132. I can attest to the fact that his goal is to address issues and I have been a witness to how he was able to settle several issues brought to his desk as AIG Regional Commander, West. He has been doing that without incarcerating people and that is the characteristic of a good leader *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the nomination of the proposed IG is the best thing the President has done for this nation. The proposed IG has multiple experiences he could use to defend this country and protect lives and property. He has once abandoned his duty as a police officer and joined the ECOMOG forces to fight for this country *[Applause]*. You would agree with me that we have never had an IG in this country that fought like a military man, but the proposed IG fought like soldier to defend this country. Therefore, there is no doubt in my mind that with his appointment

and eventual approval by this House, Sierra Leone and the Sierra Leone Police will be transformed to a force for better. Like I said, I have never seen an appointment that kindled jubilations. When he was nominated by the President, I was at JSK and everybody at the police station was jubilating. So, what we have today is a fine gentleman, a man that is poised to reform the Sierra Leone Police; a man that is poised to transform the mind-sets [left behind by the APC] of the Sierra Leone Police; and a man that is poised to transform the force from 'A force for good to a force for better' *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for this opportunity and I want to let him know that he has the full confidence of this House. I am sure that this House will approve his nomination. I however want to remind him to work harder and make the President and this House proud. If approved by this House, make security your top priority and continue to address matters. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. Interestingly, one thing is becoming palpably clear every day. The two Honourable Members, Honourable Abdul Kargbo and Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh share certain commonalities. I would like to remind you that both of them have underlined the fact that it is a very difficult job to be a police officer *[Applause]*.

**HON. RUGIATU .R. KANU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I am not here to praise sing, but to speak to the Police as an institution. On countless occasions, we have seen how Police used brutality and force to intimidate peaceful civilians. For instance, elected Members of Parliament were bundled out of this Well *[Applause]*. We were treated like criminals in this Well. The pain is still fresh in our minds and I am still seeking medical attention due to the pain I got during that police brutality. As a woman, there was no one to protect us and our human rights were violated in this Well. We have seen a lot of instances where the police used force to intimidate peaceful civilians. We have also seen how the police manhandled those peaceful protesters in the name of maintaining security.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in our constituencies, the police officers have created more divisions among our people. We have seen politicians in governance using police officers to intimidate and create mayhem on peaceful civilians; and today, even neighbours are not in speaking terms as a result of the actions of the police.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about recruitment into the police force. I am sure there were recruitment criteria into the police force. As we speak, I can authoritatively say there were qualified Sierra Leoneans who submitted applications for recruitment into the force, but because of their surnames, their applications were rejected *[Applause]*. I am saying it with authority because I know what I am saying here. Mr Speaker, this is how the recruitment process was conducted. This is happening under the watchful eyes of the Police. The question is, are we safe as Sierra Leoneans? Can the police tell us the rules of engagement? Some of us are confused because of the highhandedness of the police on peaceful citizens. I want the police officers to take note of the oath they took to protect lives and property. Do they stand by that oath?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the proposed Inspector General of Police. We have heard a lot from both sides about police brutality, police highhandedness on peaceful citizens. The question is, do we sit and allow this to continue as a nation? You are here seeking the approval of this House as the Inspector General of Police. In one of your statements, you promised to create a situation that would enhance the image of the Police Force. If approved, I hope you will not only talk the talk, but will work the talk *[Applause]*. You are here seeking the approval of parliamentarians, but you should not forget that we are representing our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want a disciplined Police Force this time. I am sure before this time, we used to say 'a force for good,' but today is just too difficult to say 'a Force for good.' It is no longer 'a force for good' and we are expecting the police officers to be our friends. The truth is that police officers are like enemies to us. Therefore, I would like to admonish you to change the narratives as somebody was saying. I want you to stop receiving orders from above. You have to do your work diligently and with the fear of God, so that when the day of reckoning comes, you will



be alone to answer to the call of God and when you are there on that day, there will be no order from above to save you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore the proposed Inspector General of Police to serve this nation regardless of party affiliation. Please serve this nation with a clear conscience, so that when you are called by the Lord, you will say I have done a good work and I am going back to my father. Do not allow your administration to be marred with 'orders from above,' but do your duty diligently. We want a disciplined Police Force; we want an independent Police Force; we want a Police Force that will protect us, the women, vulnerable groups; and we need a Police Force that will protect us. On that note, I thank you as we wait for your approval *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. I am getting few surprises this morning. I am sorry, but I have to be firm. I am going to use the guillotine process, even though some might accuse him of coming to present a statement that in itself is self-serving, I think fairness demands that I recognise him and give him two minutes before we wind up the debate.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about a fine gentleman who has been nominated by His Excellency the President to the position of Executive Chairman, Environmental Protection Agency, Dr Bondi Gevao. I am here to lend my voice to the good leadership of the President. One thing that struck my mind about Dr Bondi Gevao is his ability to convince his peers [no matter the comfortable jobs they have abroad], to come back and serve this nation. If I am asked to start naming genius, I would have named him as one of the geniuses born in Sierra Leone. He is an extremely intelligent elder brother. He is a brother I admired very much and he is one of the few Sierra Leoneans with fifty publications in recognised international journals. I goggled him yesterday and it was so easy to find Dr Bondi Gevao and Dr Foday Jaward. Research is one of the things we need in Sierra Leone. We use research to formulate policies and we must embark on very good research processes. I know you to be a performer, but I have a little advice for you. I am sure before you left Sierra Leone, you paid your dues. You were a teacher

at the Cardinal Syndicate, where you prepared students for the O'Level. You taught at the Rokel Secondary School and Lectured at Fourah Bay College. You paid your dues before you went for your Master Degree and PhD in London. The President has bestowed his confidence in you and you are expected to do your job.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President promised to eradicate indiscipline and lawlessness in the country and this is why he decided to nominate a fine gentleman as Inspect General of Police. We have had lawlessness and indiscipline being displayed in the Sierra Leone Police. I am sure the proposed Inspector General of Police will live up to expectations. The President declared war against indiscipline and lawlessness. I want to assure my colleagues that the proposed Inspector General of Police will eradicate indiscipline and lawlessness in this country. I will not hold a brief for the Police, but it behoves every Sierra Leonean to behave honourably. You do not need to be a Member of Parliament before you behave honourably. If you behave dishonourably, you leave the Police with no option, but to enforce the law *[Applause]*. There are people who will want to bring certain issues to you, but I do not want you to encourage them at all. You start encouraging them, you will be involved and the moment you get involved in black magic, God removes the umbrella.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know Dr Bondi Gevao to be a disciplined Sierra Leonean and I want to encourage him to continue to be disciplined. I know you to be a performer and I have no doubt that you will make this House proud. If approved by this House, make Sierra Leoneans proud. You have to ensure that our environment is protected. I will draw your attention to the reserved areas which were well protected under the APC. The area is situated around Kent and it is about to be vandalised. That area is a protected area, people have started interfering with that place in the pursuit of getting land. If you drive along that area, you will see what is happening there. I listened to Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella in his interview. Also, the Honourable Veronica K. Sesay drew your attention to the environmental effect in some islands. I however have no doubt in your ability to perform because you are a proactive gentleman and you will take on board the concerns expressed by my colleagues. The Environmental Protection

Agency and many other institutions in Sierra Leone tend to overlap in terms of functions, but we expect you to work in the interest of protecting the environment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry of Lands, in the process of performing their functions, must consider the existence of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Protected Area Authority must also bear in mind that there is an Environmental Protection Agency. We have this situation at Brook Street, where it is reported on national radio that somebody went and built a house on a drainage gutter. We want some of these issues to be addressed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for being very fair and for giving me this opportunity to talk about my brother. I have so much respect for you because you are disciplined. I want to implore my colleagues to approve these fine gentlemen. I thank you *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. The last Speaker on my list is the Honourable Kandeh K. Yumkella before we wind up.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it was not my intention to take the Floor since I was in the interview panel, but when I listened to Honourable Abdul Kargbo and Honourable Tawa Conteh, I felt compelled to say something about the proposed IG, Mr Ambrose Sovula. The late President, Dr Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabba was a man who built many institutions to support democracy in this country. He thought it fit to create a professional police force. In fact, he devoted time and resources to achieve this aim. When I was listening to the future leaders of this country, Honourable Abdul Kargbo and Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh, they described what 'Alhassan and Alusine' did to them. From their testimonies, I realised that the public does not trust the police. There is an Amnesty International Report covering the period from 2014 to 2017, and there are other reports now that have come out covering the period from 2018 to 2019. The issues are the same, too much police brutality and disproportionate force been used. The proposed IG is inheriting a big challenge, but he has to work towards restoring public trust in the police to becoming 'a force for good.' It is clear from what the two young men have said that the

politicians are trying to corrupt the police force. We have been hearing 'orders from above' from 2014 to 2018 and that has not changed at all. Today, we are hearing 'I am directed' and it is the same as 'orders from above.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my colleagues, I want Mr Ambrose Sovula to know that he has a responsibility to protect our democracy. Some of us have been victims due to lack of intervention by the police or over reaction of the police. In his interview, he promised to protect our right to freedom of expression, our democracy and the security of this country. If you achieve this, then people will start investing into the country. We are badly in need of investment opportunities. You have heard testimonies from the two Honourable Members and I can state here that you have inherited a bad institution and this institution is being corrupted by politicians. I would like you to resist politicians who tell you not to be professional. Please do your job and give necessary instructions to your men. Let us respect them like they respect police forces in other parts of the world. Please avoid politics and do your job. May God help you to do the right thing, so that there will be investments in the country. We the politicians will even be more agitated and will challenge you now to defend our rights to speak and demonstrate peacefully because it is our right. God bless you!

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now call on the leader of the Opposition.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to also thank you for the continued patience you exercise in this House. We know that it is always never perfect. If we had known it was going to look like this today, we might have advised otherwise, but we have however found ourselves now in this circumstance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join the Honourable Hindolo Gevao in acknowledging the credentials of Dr Bondi Gevao, proposed Executive Chairman, EPA. I only meet him for the first time, but with the brief interaction we had, I hope the young Gevao will grow to be like him *[Laughter]*. His CV and his response to questions confirmed his competence and he was very humble to acknowledge the competence

and space he will be enjoying through the Minister, Dr Jaward. That synergy is a very good foundation for any office to survive. Sometimes when you have an Executive Chairman who thinks he/she is more powerful or knows what he/she does, there is always bound to be chaos. I want to join others before me to recommend him for approval and to also encourage the Committee on the Environment to work closely with his Unit as they have been working with the Ministry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I need not say much about Dr Abdul Jalloh because I have known him for years and I know he is qualified and competent for this job. For Mr Zainu Deen-Karim, I can hear the voice of the senior prefect. Like Dr Abdul Jalloh, Mr Zainu Deen-Karim is well-known to me. I saw the Retired Lt Col in green yesterday; and today, he is in grey. He is a very fine gentleman and I am sure he served well in the military. Mr Speaker, there is something the Honourable Leader will tell you about the party colour, but that only happens within the walls of China House, when they are sharing something. It is known as the party colour.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy for Lt Col [Rtd] Samuel Erasmus Tucker, proposed Member, National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency. Mr Speaker, when we talk about drugs, there is an analogy from 1961 to date and we have graduated from one brand to another. I hope they will get financial and other supports to actualise the responsibilities they have been assigned to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Leader of the NGC has again mentioned 'Alusine and Alhassan,' but he has never confirmed that he is a child of one of those parents *[Laughter and Applause]*. Mr Speaker, I would leave that for today.

**THE SPEAKER:** And would you say legitimate child *[Laughter]*?

**HON. CHERNOR M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I will leave that for today because the NGC Leader and I will engage in a more spacious room. This room is too small for such conversation, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the police have been attacked today and they have not been lambasted like this before. Honourable Member Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella said

with these pieces of information, it is good to advise ourselves. In the interview yesterday, the Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella referred to two reports, the one between 2014 and 2017 and the other 2018 to date. I was taken aback when he said that the two reports are the same. Well, I want to state here they might be similar, but they will never be the same. They can never be the same and I am sure he knows what I am talking about. So, I will advise you to read the two reports again. We are leaders and we will keep some of the language in the House, but go back and read them. We know where we are ranked after the 2018 general elections. We are not responsible to determine the ranking, but the documents speak for themselves. We are not blaming any individual. I can hear people saying that this is the force that was inherited. Well, they are fortunate because they also inherited the IG *[Applause]*. Fortunately, with all the praises he is getting today, he is also an inherited individual within the Sierra Leone Police. He was serving in the APC led government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as lawyers, we come across many policemen. Honourable Hindolo M. Gevao now works across the corridors more than I do. I am sure I do not know the court rooms anymore. If I want to go there, he has to hold my hand and lead me through the building. Again, it might have to do with the confidence in the Judiciary. I have stopped going to Court for a very long time even before 2018. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Hindolo Gevao will confirm that if you check the records at Roxy Building, you will not find my signature on any conveyance or agreement for quite a long time. I know exactly what I am doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said yesterday, the memories of what happened in April, 2018 in this Chamber are still lingering in our minds. Again, what happened at our party offices at Old Railway Line on the 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019 will always be in our hearts. We will forgive, but we will not forget. I am happy that the Honourable Member from Constituency 132 was bold enough to confirm the incident that took place at Lumley after 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. The incident he was referring to took place at Lumley and he was already a Member of Parliament. I am happy that it came from him because there was

misinformation about who was the elected Member of Parliament. May God save our Judiciary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proposed IG is heading to an office marred with many challenges. There are instances of 'orders from above,' but at the same there are instances when those orders were not true. I am a living testimony to that. There have been instances where innocent civilians were reprimanded, arrested or detained by the police in the name of 'order' from above,' but if the order is coming from somewhere, that I or the Leader of Government Business the Speaker has access to, and they know it is not true, they would ask you S.Os. [2] 'Pa udat call you sir?' They should not use us to do things that are not right. These are experiences I have had in the past, Mr Speaker. A lot of good things have been said about the proposed Inspector General, even though we have been reminded about the incident that took place at constituency 110 and the peaceful demonstration that was carried out by the students of the Limkwokwing University. Those students were peaceful demonstrators, but again we would always ask ourselves this question, was there anything he could have done that he failed to do? If the answer is no, then you cannot blame him, but if the answer is yes, then we will blame him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, as I said earlier I have had a lot.

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

**HON. CHERNOH R. M. BAH:** As I said earlier, I spent part of my life in the court room and I have met good police officers. When we talk about the police, we should also remember that there are good police officers *[Applause]*. We should always remember that, Mr Speaker. As I said yesterday, Mr Morie Lengo was at the interview and he is a very good example of a fine police officer *[Applause]*. We also have Kandeh Bangura, the late Tamba Bekie and FUK Daboh. These are fine police officers *[Applause]*. I am sure the proposed IG worked with all of these police officers I have just mentioned because he has been in the Police since **1980**. He must have learnt from many of these names I have mentioned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have had a lot of encounters with the proposed IG, but all of them have been pleasant. I have never had any negative experience with him, but I am not the one individual in Sierra Leone. This means I do not only talk for myself, but for my constituents. If you were listening to the Report presented by the Leader of Government Business, the proposed IG has promised to improve what he would meet if approved by this House. He promised to ensure that the mistakes that happened in the past would not happen again.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to assure you that we will continue to be a responsible Opposition that will call things by their names and at the same time support where necessary. If the proposed IG is approved, we will be following his activities in terms of what he will be doing. We are determined to monitor his activities, so that if 'goes out of line' [as the police will normally say], we will bring him back. We hope he will not give us the cause to bring him back. Fortunately, your Minister is here and if we do not bring you, we will bring the Minister. Therefore, you have to allow the Minister to enjoy his peace. We will not accept 'orders from above,' because the only thing that is above is the law. Recently, the Leader of Government Business, the Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs and I had an incident in which we were not treated nicely. We will keep that for another day because I have engaged the person that was involved and we came to a meaningful conclusion. I hope that will not happen again. When we talk to ourselves, we should understand each other. I want to remind this House that we need each other and if you fail to respond when I needed you, I will not cooperate either.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I endorsed the four nominees earlier and I will include the proposed Inspector General of Police *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, before I take my seat, I want to kindly plead with you to talk to our visitors to leave peacefully and orderly because of the COVID 19 we do not want to be found wanting in this House *[Applause]*. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution. I now call on the Leader of Government Business to make his contribution.



**HON. SIDI M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start as usual by thanking my colleagues who have contributed to this Motion, especially the Leader of the Opposition. He spoke very well and I really appreciate his comments and we will take everything into consideration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have five nominees and two are going to the National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency. I am sure one of the biggest threats as a country is unemployment for the young people. This is why a lot of the young people are now involved in taking drugs. If I am not mistaking, Dr Abdul Jalloh is the only Psychiatrist in this country. He is a young man, but a lot of people do not know him. S.Os. [2] 'Na e dae handle craze yard na dis country, na e take over from Dr Naim. He is a young man and was offered a very good job in Kenya, but he left that country to come and serve his people *[Applause]*. We appreciate him as a country and as a Parliament. We believe you are doing extremely well for the people of this country, especially the young generation. Therefore, I call on you to continue the good work and we, as a Parliament, will continue to give you all the supports you will need.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Mr Zainu Deen-Karim. He is already a performer and an Accountant. Mr Zainu Deen-Karim is already working for the country and he is doing very well for the young people of this country. He is one of those people we are proud of.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, everybody has been talking about him Dr Bondi Gevao. This is an educated individual and he is one of those that left the greener pasture to come and serve. We appreciate him as a Parliament and to assure him that we will do everything possible to give him the support he needs at the EPA. You are going to EPA at a time when there are serious challenges, especially with deforestation. I am happy because you promised to use drones to monitor what is happening to in the environment. I will call on the Government of Sierra Leone to provide the drones that will be needed by Dr Bondi Gevao to do his job.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about the proposed Inspector General of Police, but one thing that is very clear is that he is taking over an institution

that is going to require a lot of reforms. If approved by this House, I would want to see a Police Force every Sierra Leonean will be proud of. It is high time we dismissed the APC or SLLP police. I believe we should forget about it and focus on rebranding the image of the police. I strongly believe that we should now be thinking about Sierra Leone police force *[Applause]*. Mr Ambrose Sovula, you have an opportunity to do so at this particular stage, considering the fact that you have a President who is also a disciplinarian. I am sure he will give you the necessary support if you are serious to bring positive reforms to the police. I will not want to come again after twenty years of SLPP governance to defend the Sierra Leone Police. I want a good police force that will be inherited by the APC after twenty [20] to twenty-five [25]. Apart from the incidents narrated by Honourable Abdul Kargbo and Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh, Members of Parliament have confidence in you. I am sure both sides of the isles have confidence in you and we expect you not to let us down. I believe you can do this job without fear or favour. As Leader of Government Business, there is no 'orders from above' in the 'New Direction.' There is nothing like that and nobody should use 'orders from above' because we do not have it in our vocabularies *[Applause]*. We are law abiding party and we want everybody, irrespective of ones' political affiliation, to be treated as a citizens of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Ambrose Sovula is a fine gentleman. I will say the only thing he knows is the police force because he grew up in the police force. I believe for the few years he will be serving the people of this country, he will become one of our finest Inspector Generals' in the history of the police force. I want to assure you that you have the support of this Parliament. We have a Committee on Internal Affairs that will give you all the support, but like the Leader of Opposition said, the entire leadership of this House will always be in touch with you. If you have issues, political or otherwise, please consult us for possible guidance. We want to give you enough support, so that you can bring positive reforms needed to make the police a 'force for better,' as mentioned by Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh. We do not want the

same issue of force for good that the APC or SLPP is complaining. Let us have a force that Sierra Leoneans can be proud of in this country.

With that, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I call on this House to approve these nominees. I thank you.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, it is now my pleasant duty to add my own voice of congratulations and felicitations to the new appointees. One thing which has emerged from this debate is that all the appointees are eminently qualified and there is no question about that.

Honourable Members, if I may single out the approved Inspector General of Police, it is quite evident from the records that he is a man who has grown and matured in the Police Force. When I listened to Honourable Abdul Kargbo and Honourable Ibrahim T. Conteh, both of them seemed to convey to the House experiences that are symptomatic of a very serious deficit of public trust in the Police Force. This is what the House has just conveyed to the new Inspector General of Police and he is going to face the biggest challenge in his new assignment. The President, in his wisdom, has confidence that you would live up to his expectations. This Honourable House has just collectively resolved that they too have confidence that you will live up to their expectations. What you need to be aware of is to be able to transform the police force in a way that will rekindle the public trust that has disappeared over the last few years. I am sure that is a formidable task that you are undertaking, but we wish you well. I want to remind you that your votes in this House just expressed our confidence that you will do the best that you humanely can to live up to the trust of the public as well. So, we wish you well in your new undertaking and as mentioned by some of the speakers, if you are in any difficulty in which you required to consult with Parliament, please do not hesitate to do so. We wish you good luck and we expect nothing, but the best from you. Congratulations once again to all of you and please try to live up to the very high

expectations, both of His Excellency and of this House collectively. You may now take leave of us *[Applause]*.

Honourable Members, I am going to stand down the House for ten minutes not for lunch, but to allow the appointees to leave and to also go in search of a valuable document which has been brought to my notice.

*[The House was adjourned at 12:25 p.m. and resumed at 1:55 p.m.]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, please take your seats.

#### **IV. CONTINUED DEBATE ON CORONAVIRUS**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, you would recall that we started our proceedings yesterday shortly after 11:00 a.m. and we did not finish until 6:00 p.m. I am sure a number of speakers made statements, but I observed that there were others who wanted to make their own contributions and that was why we decided to extend the debate to today. With your indulgence, I want to limit the debate to not more than an hour and half; one hour will be devoted to Members of Parliament and half an hour to the respective ministers to respond. I think that will be fair enough. On that understanding, I will allocate three minutes to each speaker and I will be very punctilious. I will complete yesterday's list of speakers.

**HON. LAHAI MARAH:** Mr Speaker, you agreed yesterday... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I did not agree to anything.

**HON. LAHAI MARAH:** You did, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** S.Os. [2] Krio man say, vex take, but you vex lef; en way you vex lef, you lossen wi don pass you.'

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, can I say something?

**THE SPEAKER:** You want to come to his aid?

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Then you are going to lose your position.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I will not, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I want to believe that the Honourable Member was promised that he would complete his contribution today. I want to plead on his behalf.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. Let us be faithful to the truth. I promised him of one minute.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I am sure he still has one minute, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. I will give him not more than one minute.

**HON. LAHAI MARAH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I spoke about protecting our local markets and the payment of wages and salaries. I can still remember that it was during the Ebola period that Government increased salaries of workers to about **15%** and they continued paying salaries till situation returned to normalcy. We want to see a continuation this, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs did not say much about their preparedness, but we are still interested in knowing how the police intend to manage the quarantined homes. How prepared are they? Have they been given special training? We also want to know if those manning the border crossing points are trained to do that job. How much is been allocated to them for that purpose?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Deputy Minister of Health spoke about the strategies used during the Ebola scourge. He said those strategies were applied all over the world and it would be a shame if there is Coronavirus outbreak in Sierra Leone and we are unable to handle it properly. He said **Le 1bln** is being allocated per week. I want to know how that money is being managed. I was a member of the Public Accounts Committee that sat on the Ebola Audit Report and I know what happened. You would agree with me that that was the first time in the history of this country we had a 'real time audit.' In other words, procurement activities when the President ordered the Auditor General to audit every transaction. We want to know what modalities you have put in place in terms of managing the **Le 1bln** per week. We do

not want to face a situation where the public will be say “den don chop Corona money lek wae den chop Ebola money, S.Os. [2].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Local Government was referring to Regent Chiefs as Paramount Chiefs. Well, I want to state here that the Regent Chiefs are losing control in their various Chiefdoms. You would agree with me that their mandate has expired and the current aspirants are tired of waiting. We want to see elections conducted because it is very important. In Falaba District, for instance, out of the thirteen [13] chiefdoms, we only have five [5] chiefdoms with Paramount Chiefs and the remaining eight [8] chiefdoms are been ruled by Regent Chiefs. We want you to involve those aspirants in managing the affairs of their own areas of Authority.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Minister of Health. I come from Falaba District, Constituency 042, which comprises Krubola and Yarwadu. If you want to go to Yarwadu, you will have to go through Falaba, Krubola, Koidu Town. I want to inform this House that the people in some of these areas do not use the Leones, but the Guinea Franc. We are so close that you can stand in Yarwadu and call somebody in Guinea. So, if you do not have good roads, it is very difficult to access those places, especially in crisis situation like this. The President has told us that health workers would be distributed across the country and we want you to consider these particular areas. We can have a health officer with a very strong motorbike for those hard to reach areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on the Minister of Finance to considerer the payment of salaries by putting on hold certain capital projects. For some of us, the amount of money allocated to Civil Registration Authority is very huge and there is no need for that at this moment. I think the money is about **Le 45bln.** It is a huge sum and to use that amount for salaries. As I said earlier, it was during the Ebola period the Government increased salaries of workers by **15%** and even when people were being quarantined, they continued to receive their salaries. I thank you very, Mr Speaker.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, mine will be in the form of few questions and a comment because we have already listened to the various ministers yesterday.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I can see many empty seats on your part.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** The Deputy Chief Whip is here to respond.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. Before I call on him, you came to my Chamber and because I am a good record keeper, I obliged. However, it seems as if the goodness... - *[Interruption]*.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I want to appeal to you not to mention that, please.

**THE SPEAKER:** To be honest, I do not like this at all.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I know, but please do not go there.

**THE SPEAKER:** Your appeal made me to search among my records and I was able to retrieve a very important document that many Members of Parliament were looking for. I have seen the document, but the seats are empty.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, thank you for seeing the document.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I thank you for the document, but please do not go there.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am forewarning you for the future.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** I know, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** If you approach me again as a good record keeper, I will not produce any documents that will have the result of this House seeing empty seats. I did not know this was going to be the result.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Mr Speaker, probably Members are outside and we will encourage the Whips to call them.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please go ahead with your contribution.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We are here talking about Coronavirus preparedness and we are trying to sensitise our people. Usually, when a virus like this nature emerged, there are terminologies or register associated with it. For instance, we have epicentre, quarantined, holding centres and contact tracers. The question I would want to ask the Minister of Health is that how effective are our holding centres? How effective are our quarantined homes? I am asking these questions because we have seen on social media videos and pictures, showing a group of people invading the Lungi quarantined home. One is tempted to ask the whereabouts of the security. There was no security officer to ensure that the quarantined home was properly safe and secured. Mr Speaker, even the holding centre was not ideal and there was neither food nor water. In as much as the Minister of Health told us that the situation in the holding centre is not too bad, I want to agree because this is supposed to be an emergency. However, we expect such facilities as food, water and the security personnel to ensure those in quarantined homes are catered for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, we have heard allegations of preferential treatments given to people in quarantined homes; people who are supposed to have come from epicentres or people who could have come in contact with infected persons. We were told that top officials were allowed to go through, while others were not allowed. These are allegations and I want to know how to address such situations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, the Minister of Local Government said he had done well to have engaged all the Paramount Chiefs in a meeting to look into certain issues. Well, Honourable Members would recall that during the Ebola outbreak, the Paramount Chiefs, Section Chiefs and Town Chiefs were very instrumental in terms of formulating bye-laws. According to the Minister, they have discovered the byelaws that were used during the Ebola period. What have you done to those byelaws? I want to know if those byelaws are still useful. We are looking at Coronavirus preparedness and prevention. As



the saying goes, prevention is better than case management. What are we doing in all of these situations? Mr Speaker, these are the questions I wanted to ask. I thank you.

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

**HON. ALPHA F. M. JABBIE:** Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I also want to thank the various officials from the different MDAs that have been with us here since yesterday, they were here for the whole of the day yesterday and they are also here for us to carry this discussion. I would like to start with few questions to the Minister of Health. The first question is that at what point does an individual who has contacted Coronavirus develops the potential to infect others who come in contact with him/her? Is it immediately after contacting the virus or is it after the two weeks when it would have come into effect? The next issue is the closure of the Lungi Airport and the temporal suspension of flights. I am sure that decision was taken because the Lungi Airport is the main gateway to enter and leave Sierra Leone. There are countries with high rate of infection and allowing people to travel from those countries to come to Sierra Leone is very disastrous. Mr Speaker, now that the Government has taken the decision to suspend flights from entering Sierra Leone, I am sure the next option is to use the land/sea routes from Guinea, Liberia and other West African states to come to Sierra Leone. As we speak, my Constituency, Constituency 040 bordered with Guinea and there are five border crossing points along that area; and out of that number, there is only one border crossing point with Veronica Bucket, water and soap for the personnel who are manning that area. The four border crossing points are without those facilities. Interestingly, we have motorbike riders known as Okada riders who are moving in and out of the country, especially on market days which we usually called 'Luma.' The 'Luma' days for Koindukura are Thursdays and Fridays while Sundays and Mondays are for Gbandi. People move in large numbers from Guinea to go to these market places and these places are exposed to certain conditions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to the Ministry of Health and other relevant ministries to send more personnel to these areas. This is because many people who used to travel in and out of Sierra Leone would now want to use these border

crossing points to enter Sierra Leone. I also want to draw the attention of those concerned to the situation in our local markets, especially in Freetown and the provincial headquarter towns. We have introduced the use of Veronica Buckets and other facilities in schools, so that Children can inculcate the culture of washing their hands. So, if we have done that in those places, what about the market places? We have Dovecot/Guard Street market, which is not totally different from the situation in schools. It is even worse because it is overcrowded. There is no social distancing in the market places and this is why something has to be done, otherwise I do not think we will be treating this issue seriously. The market places must be provided with Veronica Buckets, soap and water if we want to prevent COVID 19 from entering this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am also sure the Correctional Centres need attention. We have to send personnel to these places to examine the condition of the Correctional Centres, so that we would be able to determine the types of measures we should apply to prevent the spread of the Virus. We also have the slum areas like Kroobay, Mabaila and other places. We have the wharfs along Guard Street and these are exposed areas we need to pay attention to. They are very prone to this Virus because [as somebody mentioned yesterday], there are boats coming from Conakry and land at the wharfs. These places need to be provided with personnel and hand washing gears, so that people get use to these hygiene practices.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will continue to appeal to the ministers concerned to provide these materials for the people. The Minister of Finance is here and I want to plead with him to provide more funds for the provision of these materials, so that these areas I have just mentioned are catered for. This is a fight we have to fight with our might. If we fail to do the correct thing, we will have problems at the end. I thank the Speaker for giving me this opportunity.

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

**HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministries, Department and Agencies [MDAs] represented in this House. They are here to inform Parliament and the people of Sierra

Leone about Government's preparedness to prevent COVID 19. We are representing the people and we are here to deliberate and find solutions to a pandemic hovering over our heads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not pleased with the presentation made by the Deputy Minister of Finance yesterday. In my opinion, she made a scanty presentation and I am not happy with that at all. I was expecting detailed presentation like what the Deputy Minister of Health did. The Deputy Minister made mention of a billion Leones per week and we wanted to know the manner in which the Ministry of Finance is doing the liquidation. I want to know how they expend one billion a week and how they mobilise funds. In her response, I would like the Deputy Minister to provide in-depth analysis of the Ministry's expenditure patterns and sources of funds. We want to know where we are and what we are expecting to see in the next two to three weeks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the situation in Lungi quarantined home is very pathetic. This is because we are spending **Le 142,857,143** a day, but the problems in the quarantined homes are still glaring. We still have electricity problem in that place for the past days. Honourable Members would recall that there were video and audio clips on social media, portraying the abysmal conditions of quarantined patients at the Lungi quarantined home. It is very alarming and we must do something. I sleep in a very small room, but it is very comfortable because I have solar light and other facilities. Mr Speaker, you would agree with me that quarantining people in a hotel without electricity is a violation of their basic rights. In fact, there are other nationals and not just Sierra Leoneans. I am sure there three Chinese and two Indians are there. If we cannot give them the basic social amenities, then we should allow them to go back to their countries. We cannot continue to hold them in a place where the environment is not convenient and there is no electricity. We are talking about preventive measures and we must provide electricity and other facilities. We are here because there is electricity, but if there is darkness, we will not move and there will be confusion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is also the problem of food, which is very alarming. You would agree with me that at the beginning of the Ebola scourge, people were monopolising the situation of Ebola and we do not want to see a similar situation. I am sure COVID 19 is very serious than the Ebola disease. I was told that the hotel management at Lungi does not provide food for quarantined patients because their prices are fixed and expensive. Therefore, food preparation is done outside the hotel for the quarantined patients. This is very unfair, Mr Speaker. The question is that are we serious to prevent the spread of COVID 19 in Sierra Leone? How did you expend the sum of **Le 142mln**? I am not trying to ignite any trouble, but we should address certain issues. In fact, I was also told that breakfast and lunch are not usually served on time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of the security personnel in charge of the quarantined homes do not have protective gears. They should be provided with protective gears at all times. Mr Speaker, people are just talking on radios and televisions, but the reality on the ground is different. Are we really serious in terms of putting modalities in place to prevent the spread of COVID 19?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was also told that the food they provide to quarantined patients is not of good quality and I am sure that could be a major reason why the people are not eating their food. Again, there is shortage of toiletries, Mr Speaker. I do not know about today, but that was the situation yesterday and I started wondering the whereabouts of the **Le1bln**. Where is the money going? I want to know if we are really serious to help poor people. As Sierra Leoneans, we have to join hands together to prevent the COVID 19 from entering Sierra Leone. In his Speech, the President has called on every Sierra Leonean to work towards putting modalities in place, so that the deadly virus will not enter this country.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on the various MDAs to take care of the quarantined homes. They should include the Paramount Chiefs, Councillors and the Members of Parliament because they have not included them yet. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. Honourable Members, I have received representations from some ministers that they have very important meetings to attend and some of the meetings are time bound. They will be meeting with international representatives who have to travel out of the country. So, the main ministries as far as this issue is concerned are the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. I am sure the Ministry of Health is well represented here. The Ministry of Finance has asked to be relieved; therefore, I would like to call on the Deputy Minister of Finance to respond. However, before she leaves, she would ask somebody to take notes on her behalf.

**DR PATRICIA N. LAVERLEY [*The Deputy Minister of Finance*]:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of the issues raised yesterday and today have been discussed at the Economic Management Team with the President. What the Ministry of Finance is currently working on is a quick action Economic Recovery Plan in response to the looming recession and the potential economic meltdown in the event we are greatly affected by COVID 19. Let me also add that when we brought the Budget to this Honourable House in November, 2019 COVID 19 was not part of that budget. The Ministry of Finance has undertaken expenditures in support of the treatment centres and sensitisation campaigns. The plan by the Ministry of Finance is not to disburse **1bln** Leones a week to the Ministry of Health. We have disbursed a billion Leones to the Ministry of Health in the last two weeks. We have disbursed **Le 1bln** Leones last week **Le 1bln** Leones this week. I thought I should make this clear to you, Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me just highlight some of the elements of the Quick Action Economic Recovery Programme that we are putting together. There are five pillars under the programme. These are to:

- build and maintain adequate stock level of essential commodities at stable prices, [economic stability];

- provide support to businesses to enable them to continue operations. The Governor spoke about the facility they are working on with the commercial banks; i.e., targeting the businesses that would be affected by COVID 19;
- provide safety nets to vulnerable groups;
- support public works; and
- provide assistance for local production of food items.

A lot of work is still on-going at the Ministry of Finance because we want to conclude this new programme and submit to Cabinet and eventually bring it to this noble House for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with respect to the macroeconomic fundamentals, I can quickly give you the figures on growth, revenue, inflation, the directionality of the macroeconomic fundamentals, and they would all be negatively impacted as a result of COVID19. With respect to debt, the spill over effects of the Ebola, under the new programme, we have approached the IMF for debt relief based on the Ebola related loans that form part of our external debt stock. On the issue of accountability, of course we have the fiduciary teams across Government in the various MDAs and they will be placed on heightened alert. We will work with them on the formulation of the new programme and we will have a special arrangement on how these funds will be managed under the new economic recovery programme we are formulating. As we speak, we have three months of import, which would at least give us fiscal space for three months, which is about hundred days. We should hopefully be able to pay our salaries on time. So the concern raised by Honourable Members on the timely payment of salaries, we hope that that will not be an issue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to mention the progress made in terms of designing the new Economic Recovery Programme in response to COVID 19. Some of the Agencies we are working on are already represented here. Of course, we have the Ministry of Health and Bank of Sierra Leone, but we are working with Ministry of Trade and Industry and Statistics Sierra Leone. There are other Agencies that are adversely impacted, or at least that will be impacted in the next few weeks or months.

So, there is data requirement and we are looking at sales patterns of essential commodities. We rely on the Ministry of Trade for some of these data; how long will the existing stock of rice, flour and oil in the country last? What are the potential impacts if we run out of these essential commodities? We are also looking at shipping patterns and transit time because lot of the containers come from China. What provision do we need to be incorporated in the new programme, so that we are not adversely affected if shipments are delayed? We are also looking at the treatment centres. We are aware of the incident at Lungi COVID 19 Holding Centres. What civil works or supports do we need for the centres that will be administering the activities we will undertake in the next few weeks and months?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for private sector and the facility, the Bank Governor will address the selection criteria and the entire Fund Governance Framework that the Bank of Sierra Leone is putting in place with the Commercial Banks on administering the funds to respond to COVID 19. For accessing funds from our development partners, we need to move fast; and as we speak, discussions are on-going with our development partners on how we can quickly access the funds that are available to Sierra Leone. So, this is what we have for now. In terms of the flows from the Ministry of Finance, we are working within the framework of the 2020 Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank you very much and I am sure I have managed to answer most of your questions. I would like to encourage you to please stay safe and may God bless us. The Director of Micro Fiscal Department will stay and take notes on my behalf and we will send written responses to some of the issues Honourable Members may raise. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Deputy Minister of Finance for her briefing. Honourable Members, there are two interrelated institutions and when one speaks, for us to have a comprehensive picture, it is necessary to give the Floor to the other. For the sake of completeness, we have to allow the Bank Governor to say something because the meeting that the Minister is going to attend also needs the presence of the Bank

Governor. So, I will ask the Bank Governor to come and respond to the concerns that were expressed yesterday and today.

**PROF KEIFALA KALLON** [*The Bank Governor of Sierra Leone*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there were some questions asked and I want to reiterate those questions. How deep is your pocket? Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella said Nigeria needed **1.5 Trillion** and what are we doing? As I told him in a side discussion yesterday, just as a prudent general will never tell you the size or composition of his arsenal, a prudent Central Bank will never tell anybody how deep the pocket is. What I can say is that the advice every central banker has received is that 'you act big and you act fast.' And given our balance sheet, what we have decided to do is to follow that advice. The question was that how soon will Parliament be briefed on the progress of our actions? Well, you are Parliament and you have the prerogative to summon the Bank at any time and we will comply. This is what you have just done and we are here. So, if you want to be briefed at any time, please call and we will comply. The other question is that why should we wait for the Minister of Trade to provide the list of essential commodities that will benefit from this special facility? Well, this is because officials of the Bank of Sierra Leone are not experts in Micro Economics that deal with small enterprises. We look at the big picture, Mr Speaker. We do not have the expertise, but the Ministry of Trade has the expertise and the data, and we rely on them to advise us based on their data.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other question that was asked is, where will the Bank of Sierra Leone get the **Le 500bIn**? I will say from the Bank's money. The Bank is a public corporation and the Government is the only shareholder. However, just as your commercial banks serve you, they take deposits from you and lend you. Well, we also take deposits from the Government and from the commercial banks and lend from them. When we take those deposits from them, we invest just like bankers do and we raise revenue from it. That is one source where the **Le 500bIn** will be raised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is also this issue of where the central banks make money. Again, we print the Legal Tender, but we have to be careful as Central



Bank not to print too much we will become like Zimbabwe. So, based on the size of our Economy and the size of our Balance Sheet, the leadership of the Bank of Sierra Leone has deemed that the **Le 500bln** can be put in the Economy without having serious inflationary impact. This is the first step, Mr Speaker. Nobody knows the impact COVID 19 will have either on the world Economy or on our own individual economies. We stand ready as the lender of last resort in this Economy to make sure that economic activity that needs financing will continue to go on to the best of the ability of the Bank of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a question on whether we have data on individuals who will access the credit facility? Again, we do not deal with micro issues. What we are going to do is to make the facility available. We are going to meet with the commercial banks. If the Ministry of Trade gives us the essential commodities, we will develop a guideline. They will follow their loans based on their procedures as they have been doing. The only difference is that we are going to give this facility to them as a single digit interest loan and tell them not to charge more than **1%** to the customers. For example, if we were to give it to them at **6%**, then they will charge **7%**. To make sure that they do not become opportunistic, we are going to ensure that if they collect **85%** of the money that they are lending to service those loans, we will give them a rebate of **1%** and that will give them an incentive to make sure that they use good writing procedures to ensure the recoverability of their money.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other question is whether we get returns in our reserves. I want to inform all and sundry that yes, we do. When the Government gets for example, disbursement from the World Bank, we buy it from them and give them Leones. When we invest, we get returns. As a small and open Economy, interest payments have not been our major concern. We are poor and we do not want to lose anything. Therefore, safety has been our concern and we will continue to invest our reserves in the safest assets available.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the final question has to do with role of the Bank in economic development. Well, the Bank is responsible for maintaining Macroeconomic

stability. We are also responsible for Financial Sector Development. These two functions are necessary to attract foreign and domestic investors; therefore, we indirectly impact economic development. Also, Section 5[1d] of the Bank of Sierra Leone Act of 2019 mandates us to support the general economic policy of Government. When the general economic policy of Government deals with economic development, then we try to support it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank this House for inviting me here. On a personal note, this House approved my nomination. When I took this job, I never knew the responsibility that I was going to take. I took a one year leave from the University because I did not know what I was going to meet. Six months down the line, the University gave me an offer to pay me **75%** of my salary if I give up my tenure or they can renew my leave for another year. In fifteen minutes, I realised that this is the best thing I have done with my life. I thank this Honourable House for giving me that opportunity to serve. I thank you *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** On behalf of the House, I would like to thank the Governor of the Central Bank, Professor Keifala Kallon, for his briefing. He has indicated to us that he would be available at any time we want to bring him here; and indeed we will bring him back because we have an outstanding issue that is unrelated to COVID 19.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a political party, the Coalition for Change [C4C] is part of the governance and it is the third largest political party in this House. This means we deserve the utmost respect and recognition in important state issues. Besides, as a Member of Parliament representing the people of Constituency 028, I believe the people voted for me to express their views or concerns on issues that affect them. I must register my disappointment to this House because I have been deprived of the opportunity to have my say on important state matters. The Speaker has been talking about fairness, but that has not been the case. I am sure the new IGP should not have been approved without the views of Members of Parliament from the Coalition for Change. We are disappointed and I am certain that is the only case. There have been several issues

Members of the C4C have been deprived in terms of making our views heard on issues of national importance. This is a serious concern and that is why I have decided to bring it to the notice of this House. I believe this concern must be taken seriously, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have heard you, Honourable Member.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, you always advise us as parliamentarians to stay off the Media.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker. This is just an observation I want to make. Mr Speaker, the Cameras are in front of us, but I wonder whether we are getting any coverage because the Cameramen seem to be sleeping and nobody is here to control them. They might want to clarify what I do not know, but all of them seem to be off and nobody is in the Well now. I do not know whether anything is happening, other than what we are doing now.

**THE SPEAKER:** I cannot answer that, Honourable Member.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** The proceeding is not given the coverage we expect because we believe what we are discussing is very important to the people of Sierra Leone and it deserves coverage.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do we have representatives from the SLBC? Honourable Member, officials of the SLBC are here to record the proceedings.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Mr Speaker, what Honourable Hassan A. Sesay is saying is that the seriousness of the business deserves to be on live coverage, rather than being recorded for onward broadcast.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** Mr Speaker, the issue of video coverage has always been a problem in this House. Most of the Journalists are only concerned about presidential nominees and immediately they are approved, the journalists follow them. This is what has just happened, Mr Speaker. Immediately the IGP was approved and asked to leave, the journalists have followed him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Speaker has always advised Members of Parliament to address our issues in this Well. We are here to talk on behalf of our people and this is the place we have the ultimate right to air out the views and concerns of our people. The Speaker of this House regulates the business of this House and is expected to display fairness and neutrality. In fact, Standing Orders S.Os. 32[2] gives the Speaker the mandate to determine who has first caught his attention. I want to state here that this Parliament is not a two party Parliament because four political parties are represented in this Parliament. When issues of national importance are discussed here, all political parties should be given equal opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of Coronavirus is very serious. We had a report from Iran which says that one person dies in every one hour. This is a very serious concern... - *[Interruption]*.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Point of Order Mr Speaker!

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, what is your Point?

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Some of us listen to World news every day and we should give the right information to the public. It is not one hour as stated earlier by my colleague; it is every ten minutes. I want to set the records straight. We are politicians and we should convey the correct information. We are representing our people and that is why we should not misinform them.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** With all due respect, Mr Deputy Leader of Government Business, I am well informed. I am talking about Iran and it is reported that one person dies in every hour.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, if you cross check with BBC, it should be ten minutes and not one hour. Please go to the BBC Website and crosscheck your information. I can challenge the Honourable Member on this issue.

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not know what you people want to quarrel about, but let me remind the Honourable Member that he has three more minutes. He has spent more than a minute quarrelling with me.

**HON. SAHR CHARLES:** I have not been quarrelling with you Sir. It is an issue that has been disturbing us and when I got this opportunity, I decided to bring it up.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that Coronavirus is a very serious issue. As I speak, Italy has surpassed China in terms of confirmed cases. This tells you how serious the issue is. We would not want a situation where some people are bent on praying for this Virus to come based on past experiences. A similar situation happened during the Ebola period and that is why we should do everything possible to avoid a recurrence. The Coronavirus is a deadlier than the Ebola Virus. As a Parliament, we should not joke with this issue at all. We want all those who are responsible to take stringent measures for them to come with concrete plans that will help prevent this Virus from entering Sierra Leone. We do not want you to keep all the resources for curative measures. Whatever we can do to prevent this disease from entering Sierra Leone must be done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bank Governor said **Le 500bln** to be deposited into the Bank. I want to know the mechanisms they are going to put in place. According to him, **Le 500bln** will be used to provide basic social amenities for the people. We want the banks to give these moneys to deserving business people who are engaged in these activities, so that the people of Sierra Leone can benefit. A colleague commented on the porous borders, and it is a critical issue. We want to ensure that we are safe, but this cannot happen if our borders are not properly secured. The Honourable Lahai Marah spoke about the hard to reach areas and I want to remind all and sundry that Falaba is not the only area. There are other communities that are hard to reach areas; and that is why we want priority to be given to those living in those areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to reiterate here that the Coronavirus is very serious and we must take politics out of it. I want to appreciate the efforts of the President in recognising the Foot Soldiers, who are the champions of the Ebola scourge. This is what we need as a country because we need to put hands on deck when we have situation like this one. We must embrace ourselves and fight this battle together.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of Oversight, I believe our oversight responsibility will continue, whether or not we are involved in the fight to prevent the Coronavirus. I believe we have the constitutional mandate to perform Oversight on everything that happens within the corridors of Sierra Leone, and that is what we are mandated to do. I believe we would execute that function to the fullest. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I want to take this opportunity to assure him and his party that the Speaker does not intentionally discriminate or show bias towards him or his party in selecting Members who take the Floor. Sometimes it is a very difficult situation because every Member of Parliament wants to take the Floor. With that understanding, we can put that issue behind us.

Honourable Members, I think it is necessary that we anticipate a time for the closure. I did say we will allow one hour and give half an hour to the various ministers to respond and I still want us to stand by that appeal.

Honourable Members, in deference to Honourable Kabia, I want to take this opportunity to recognise a visitor in our midst and have been a great supporter in his Constituency, 106 in the person of Mr Khan *[Applause]*. I just want to acknowledge his presence in our midst. I think I will take four more speakers before we conclude this matter.

*Suspension of S Os. 5[2]*

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will make my point on this very important issue. I am a little bit disappointed that the Minister of Health is not around even though he never got your excuse. I have two questions.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member. The only people who asked to be excused were those from the Ministry of Finance.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will go straight to the point. Mr Minister, in respect of your preparedness, we should be dealing with the issue of COVID 19 as if it is already here. In other words, our preparedness should appear as if the virus is already here. In that regard, the Minister of Health mentioned only three points for testing; one in Kenema, one at Jui and the other at Lakka. I do not

think that is enough preparedness. If you have over 300 testing kits and you have more trained staff, I am sure you have to decentralise these resources. I am saying based on past experience during the Ebola scourge. In other words, the 300 testing kits and other facilities should be deployed in every part of the country. For instance, if somebody contracts the virus in Kabala Town, taking the patient from Kabala to Kenema, Jui or Lakka to be tested is going to be a herculean task. He will infect many people and they need delivery system. I am sure you met ambulances, but they are no longer new. Therefore, I want to know how many of those ambulances are in good condition and how many ambulances you have just procured to prepare for this fight. Please tell us how many ambulances are available and how many new ones are being procured.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that during the Ebola scourge, our healthcare workers suffered more than anyone else. We lost revered medical personnel in this country. In fact, when I went to my constituency to sensitise my people, I played all the videos and a nurse was advising the people S.Os. [2] “enti una nor believe waetin ar dae tel una, wel enti una don see na the projector how this Ebola dae kill people dem, well now ar bilive say, after this una go know waetin ar mean.” Mr Speaker, we did not know that this nurse has already been infected and she was five months pregnant. Two weeks later, the signs manifested and she died. So, I want to appeal to the Government for our health workers by providing risk allowance. We should not wait until the Coronavirus enters this country. I am sure in the midst of preparedness, it may have happened already; you may have been contacting certain people who have been infected. Therefore, risk allowance must be provided for these services. What is your plan in respect of risk allowance for health workers? Our poor nurses and doctors are risking their lives and in most cases they do not know that the people they interact with [by way of testing], have already been infected. This virus is easily transmitted to them. What provision have you made for them? I am happy for the 117 that you have resuscitated. I believe it must be popularised because people knew the importance of 117. We have almost forgotten about it. I am sure it is free and

it can be used by anybody and in all the networks. To what extent have you popularised that number, so that the people can know about it?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a Motion before the House and you instructed me the last time to write a correspondence and I have compiled. I wanted to invoke S.Os. 15[4] this morning, but I allowed prudence to prevail. However, because of the existing circumstance, I refused to invoke S.Os. 15[4]. Nevertheless, I want this House to know that the underlying reasons behind that Motion is for the NCRA to withhold their activities for now. I know this is completely different from what we are discussing now, but it bothers on civil and political rights of Sierra Leoneans. However, under the present circumstance, it bothers on right to life and this is why it is more serious. So, I advised myself as far as that Motion is concerned, but I will bring it up at the right time. It is not wise for me to invoke S.Os. 15[4] at this time because it will disrupt the system and it will not augur well for the good of this country. So, I will not invoke S.Os. 15[4], but it will be done later. I want to inform this House that what we are discussing now is completely different because it bothers on right to life. We commend the Ministry of Health and Ministry of the Internal Affairs for their efforts. You cannot quarantine people for fourteen [14] days while NCRA activities are going on and those activities are meant to last for eight days. I am sure everybody wants his/her name to be captured in the NCRA data. If you decide to continue with activities while people are quarantined, they will be forced to break the rules and go for registration, which is not possible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some people are in other countries, but they might want to come and register on the 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020. Unfortunately, His Excellency has proclaimed for a temporal suspension of flights in and out of this country. This means that they cannot come at this time, but yet they deserve the right to be registered as Sierra Leoneans. How can this work? People have the right to be included in the NCRA register or NCRA data system, but because of the temporal suspension of flights in and out of this country effective tomorrow, then those staying outside Sierra Leone who had planned to come cannot come anymore because the situation we have bothers on right



to life. Therefore, I want the Speaker to note that my Motion still stands and if the activities continue as planned, then I will have no option, but to invoke Section 86, Sub-Section 2 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have not yet moved the Motion, but I have given a notice of Motion. The Speaker knows the Motion I am talking about and I have advised myself not to insist on moving that Motion now based on S.Os.15 [4]. I will not move it now, but it still stands. The President has proclaimed and he is saying that the question of whether the virus will come here or not is no longer the issue. The question is when will it come? To me, it is very serious and we have to help the President in this situation. We have to help His Excellency like we did during the Ebola scourge. The current President needs collective supports and that is why I said prudence needs to prevail in respect of NCRA activities. There are people outside Sierra Leone who cannot come at this time; and those in quarantined homes cannot break the rules to come and register. So, we need to take note of that, otherwise Section 86, Sub-Section 2 will be invoked and then I will proceed with my Motion. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Honourable Member for his wisdom and for his sense of priority. The point he made is noted and quite frankly, it is another reminder to the entire House and I want to predicate the reminder on what the President said in his statement. He said, **"The question we are faced with is not whether we are under threat, but when that threat will actually actualise itself."** So, there is a sense of urgency. It connotes a sense of imminence; and since it affects the right to life, which is the primordial right under our Constitution and the primordial right in the scheme of things, the natural law of things should take precedence over everything else.

Honourable Members, the matter we are discussing is an issue of great moment and we must pay serious attention to it. We have been lucky thus far that there is no proven case of Coronavirus within our country because we still do not have the evidence. However, with the going in and out that we see happening, there may well be a latent case yet to be discovered and it is worrisome. Let us not underestimate the ravaging

consequences of this Virus. You would agree with me that CNN, Aljazeera and BBC devote **90%** of their news coverage 24/7 to this Virus. So, if anybody is waiting to be told about how seriously the rest of the world is taking this Virus that is the testament of their position. We must not take this lightly and we cannot afford to let that terrible disease roar its ugly head in our country. We are ill-prepared to treat it and that is why we must focus on how we can prevent it.

Honourable Members, before this debate, I drew attention to all of you to look at the preventive measures that are possible, particularly within the context of Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Do we have to wait until there is a proven case before invoking Section 29 of the Constitution? It is up to you, Honourable Members. I will give the Floor to the Honourable Komba Kamanda. I received a list here that contains that name. I hope I am correct. Well, indeed my eyes did not deceive me. I received this from C4C and the name Komba Kamanda is written on it. I will give three minutes to each speaker. I will give priority to those who along the border areas. I start with Honourable Emilia L. Tongi.

**HON. EMILIA L. TONGI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thought you were going to catch my eyes since yesterday, but it was unfortunate for me. I want to thank the Ministry of Health and Sanitation for their presence here. They responded to this summon immediately they got the invitation. This is their case; this is their business; and we want to appreciate all of them. We have been inviting other institutions to this House, but some never took us serious. I do not want to compare you to them, but to let you know that we appreciate the Minister and his team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Coronavirus is a very dangerous Virus and I would like to cite an example because Members of Parliament are expected to fight with you. I am saying this because they know their people better and they know exactly the lapses. Mr Speaker, I have met the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Lahai Laurence Leema here and I told him about the problems I was facing in my Constituency. He promised to go there with me, but unfortunately, he left without taking me along. A month after his visit, thirty [30] gunmen entered my Constituency

from Liberia. Thank God, they came in good faith, but it could have been like any of this satanic Virus. So, Mr Lahai Laurence Leema, this is one of the examples you pretend to get; i.e., the know-how and all the strategies, but without Members of Parliament [who know their people better than you], there is no way you can be successful. I want to inform you that my constituency shares borders with Guinea and Liberia. You all know that the Ebola Virus and the civil war entered this country through my constituency. We need strong armed men and logistics to barricade our people in my Constituency. I have been crying for this for a very long time. I have been talking about this issue and I will continue to say it here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Coronavirus is another catastrophic and un-repairable disease that wants to enter this country. We do not know how to handle such pandemic and we do not even have the resources. This Virus does not know boundaries. My people and I need to be protected. I will go to my constituency tomorrow and I will take along some Veronica Buckets. I want to find ways of protecting my people. I need you to accompany me because your presence will change many things. If you join me, we can make a better Kissi Tongi, Kissi Bendu and Kissi Teng. So, I am appealing to the Minister of Health [who is a brother], to pay attention to the Kailahun District or constituencies 001, 002 and 003. Honourable Hindolo Gevao, Honourable Sahr Juana and I represent those constituencies. We are in danger because our constituencies are always prone to dangerous situations. I have received thousands of calls from my constituents because they want to know what is happening. **"Mum what is going on in our Constituency?"** I usually say I do not know, but I will be addressing Parliament and the Minister of Health. I said the Minister will come and help me to sensitise you on what to do and what not to do. This is my appeal because my people are asking for help, but I cannot help them alone. I cannot do it without you all. The Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs went there in my absence, but I hope I will be informed any time he pays another visit. Honourable Member, this is not about being partisan because I am an Independent Member of Parliament and what I am saying is for Sierra Leoneans [*Undertone*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have a very good example that I want to bring to the notice of this House. There was a fierce fight in my Constituency and a lot of boys and girls were arrested. The situation was just too much for me and I came here crying for my people. I met Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah and I spoke to other Members of political parties. Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah stood up and said, **"anywhere in this country is my country."** He said look among my Members of Parliament and choose anyone to accompany you. I chose one Member of Parliament and we went to the place and settled the impasse. This is how it should be, Mr Speaker. I am sure when there is a problem, let us come together and forget about party colours and symbols. If we come together to solve problems, we will succeed. You would agree with me that togetherness will make us stronger. This is the message I want to relay about this satanic Virus. It is threatening every life and we are too weak to handle it. The Italians are suffering and if Italy is brought to its knees, it means we are in trouble.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want you to join me to talk to the Minister of Health to involve us in this fight. They cannot fight alone, I thank you.

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

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Let me first of all thank representatives from the MDAs, especially the Ministry of Health. They have been with us for two days because of the importance of this issue. As the saying goes, 'once bitten twice shy;' we have experienced Ebola before and we knew how it ravaged our communities. We knew what happened with our Economy because the Ebola Virus caused a lot of mayhem in our country. It took us a long time to recover from the consequences. I am sure due to our experience with the Ebola, our people are ready to respond to measures that are now being recommended by the Ministry of Health. This is going to be better than it used to be before the outbreak of Ebola because we fought an enemy [Virus] we could not see with our naked eyes. We however thank God because we are now taking the lead from States that are well advanced in terms of their healthcare infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that Italy has lost over 4,000 people to the virus. People are dying in those powerful European countries as a result of the Coronavirus. According to the British Broadcasting Cooperation [BBC] America has approved the use of Chloroquine as a measure to cure the Coronavirus. This is telling us that even the most advanced countries in terms of their medical infrastructure, are still struggling to find a cure. What do we say if we are unfortunate to have just one of that in our country?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at what is happening in Lumley, you will see how people move shoulder to shoulder. You would agree with me that the threat is greater than what we might perceive right now. We have decided to be very proactive and we should continue along that line. Sierra Leone is limited when it comes to resources and we know our capability when it comes to dealing with health issues. I am certain that the lives of Sierra Leoneans matter more than anything else. We have to ensure that all other thing can wait until we deal with this situation because it has not yet come to our country. However, we have seen how it has devastated other countries and it is against that background I said that when the Ebola Virus struck this country, we had no knowledge of its devastating consequences. Nevertheless, our ability to deal with this Virus is greater than ever.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our colleague visited Wilberforce, the Chinese Unit at 34 Hospital. He said he was impressed with the country's preparedness. Well, what is the capacity? When we talk about testing kits, we are talking about 357 kits. Mr Speaker, I want to ask the President to invoke Section 29 of 1991 Constitution as soon as possible because this is what we need to do. May God forbid, if someone enters into this country with the virus, it is going to be disastrous. We have heard about it in Guinea and Liberia; but fortunately, we have not heard about it in Sierra Leone. The Speaker mentioned something we must take note of; i.e., there might be a latent case which has not been detected. The question is what if it is detected? Do you think we have to wait for that time? Let us be more proactive. The Leader of Opposition was talking about taking proactive measures to suspend the NCRA activities. I think they

can wait for things to return to normalcy to address that issue. This is because the data can be collected at anytime and anywhere. I do not think the atmosphere is conducive for those activities. I think we must pay attention to the lives of Sierra Leoneans, rather than paying attention to something that could be conducted at any time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the **Le1bln** the Deputy Minister of Finance was talking about. She said a billion Leones has already been spent and that the second amount is almost processed. I am sure we are talking about a hundred thousand dollars. Mr Speaker, I am certain that the said sum has been spent already, but we need to know how that money has been spent. Somebody was talking about real time audit and we do not want to get into a situation where people are falsely accused of squandering money. This is why record keeping is very important. We expect proper record keeping after expenditure because that is the only way we can keep track of moneys. We are aware that money is a dangerous element because people have the tendency to divert funds meant for a particular purpose. In order to prevent such situation, we have to submit weekly returns. This is what I will refer to as real time audit. However, I want to state here that the global threat the virus is posing is not a territorial pandemic. During the Ebola scourge, we had support from our development partners. In this situation however, those that we depend on are also grappling with their own predicament. They will not abandon their own problem to solve ours. They have to settle their own problem first before considering others. This is a natural phenomenon and we must fight for ourselves. Let us take the necessary measures that will prevent this deadly virus from entering this country. The President should invoke Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution and suspend all activities relating to public gathering. Mr Speaker, it is but prudent for us to go and sensitise our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to come up with a compressive message that will be taken to our people. We have to synchronise these messages. When the Ebola virus broke out, there were doubts everywhere and that created lots of confusion in the process. Like I said earlier, 'once bitten twice shy,' we have experienced it before and that could be the reason why

people are adhering to social distancing. People will respect this preventive measure more than ever. Mr Speaker, you will notice that people shake hands with their elbows because we know what Ebola did to our country. Today, because of the experience from the civil war, people are now saying, S.Os. [2] 'wi nor want war na this country again.' People are saying this because we have experienced war. Similarly, we do not want Corona because we have experienced Ebola and we know what Ebola did to our communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the President to hastily invoke Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, so that all activities relating to social gathering are temporarily suspended. I am sure this will make the work easier for the healthcare personnel. We have to stop risking their lives because they are the frontline workers in this fight. We knew how we lost good medical officers during the Ebola scourge. We do not want to lose more healthcare workers this time. We have lost a considerable number of medical doctors. This is about our country and our people, and it should be our first responsibility in terms of safe guiding their lives. Mr Speaker, for every one Sierra Leonean that is lost, it is a big loss to our country. There is video clip on social media about those in quarantined home at Lungi. I do not know the measures being put in place to correct that situation, but maybe the healthcare workers will tell us more about that. We want to know the structures being put in place to ensure that we will not see ugly incidents from quarantined homes. We expect the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Local Government to work with the Paramount Chiefs, the Section Heads and Headmen to formulate bye-laws that will help combat this Virus. We can revive the bye-laws that were made during the Ebola period. I am sure they could be very effective. Some of us went to our respective constituencies and worked with local authorities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister said that what we did here is now being replicated in more advanced countries because we were successful. So, if we were successful, we have to gain more successes because we are more experienced. We have to take proactive measures. I am appealing to the President to invoke Section 29

of our Constitution as soon as possible. It makes sense to address this issue in a more proactive manner, rather than waiting for the worst to happen. This is because the curative aspect is more difficult than the preventive aspect. I think this is the attitude we must adopt in order to save this country from this Virus. We have to get out of this situation and save Sierra Leone. S.Os. [2], 'leh wi nor get one Corona case.' I think that will be better for all of us. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**HON. JOSEPHINE MAKIEU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I am happy once again for this privilege to talk about Corona disease outbreak that is ravaging the World. Mr Speaker, I want to inform this House that I worked for the Ebola Management Centre in Kenema District. I was the head in the North from 2014 to the end of the epidemic. I was also in charge of the Kono District Ebola Management Centre, and I was awarded the Florence Nightingale Medal. It was not an easy task and I can still remember what I went through during that turbulent time. What we are discussing here today is worrisome.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we were closing the Ebola Management Centre, I came up with recommendations which could be applicable if there is Corona outbreak in this country. This is the time we might not have much headache to see how we can prepare ourselves against the Corona Virus. As officer-in-charge, I managed seventy-six [76] trained and qualified nurses apart from the staff. I only had one infected case and the patient died. The good news was no nurse from the team I managed died. In Kenema Hospital, Dr Kahn died and M'balu was my mentor, but unfortunately she also died. Therefore, the Corona Virus is not a child's play. As we speak, there are people making mockery of the situation. There are lots of jokes about this Virus and this is worrying, Mr Speaker. If people know the danger that is about to come to this country, nobody will make mockery of the situation. We should be thinking how to protect ourselves or how to protect our people and this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the nurses who were working with me are very unhappy. This is because they have been trained, but the Ministry has not provided pin codes for enrolment into the Government's workforce. They are professionals and some



are in the Parliamentary Canteen, seeking for assistance to be incorporated into the Civil Service. They are still asking for their pin codes because they have never been absorbed into the Ministry's payroll voucher.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the closing ceremony, I made the following recommendations:

[i] retention of the trained and qualified IPC team and absorbed into the civil service. The recommendation was made in order to address any other outbreak like this one.

[ii] Government should not close all epicentres. I said some of the epicentres must be kept in good order for future use. Today, the red light is pointing to Sierra Leone. I really appreciate the efforts of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. They are trying their best and we must also support them. For me, to fight a war is easier than to wait for a fight. We appreciate the efforts of the ministries, and we hope and pray that this Virus will not come to Sierra Leone. The President is working relentlessly to make sure that this disease does not come to our country. However, in the event the Virus enters Sierra Leone, are you ready to set up new epicentres? Are you ready to train new staff and leaving the trained and qualified ones? We need to take that into cognisance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Coronavirus is not for one person, but for everybody. It does not discriminate whether you are a soldier, a police officer or a civilian. We are here to talk about possible measures to prevent the Virus from entering Sierra Leone. I went to Port Loko District Council last week and I observed that there was a Veronica Bucket without soap. People washed their hands without soap. There is no proper monitoring and I became worried. Those in quarantined homes in Port Loko were crying bitterly. The DMO was very restless while we were distributing the drugs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask the Ministry to double their steps and give more support to the Honourable Members of Parliament. Our people are asking us every day about how we are going to help them. How are they going to go about it? Our Health centres are there, but we need to go and sensitise them. We need to tell them what is happening. I think our presence is needed. It is much better for us to go

to our people. We thank every one of you who came here to tell us about your preparedness against this Virus. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

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

**HON. ABUBAKARR FOFANAH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to lend my voice to this debate. Many issues relating to the Coronavirus have been raised by my senior colleagues and I want to thank the Ministry of Health for responding to this House's summon. It is their role to be here, but we must also thank this Honourable House for summoning them here, so that they can explain to the people's representatives their preparedness against COVID 19.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure our democracy is maturing because colleagues on both sides are fighting a common course. I want to thank the mover of this Motion, Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella because it has given us the opportunity to inform our people about this deadly virus. Mr Speaker, since my senior colleagues have exhaustively elaborated on the issue under discussion, I want this Honourable House to know that we have a role and responsibility to perform for the safety of our people. We have the Police, Fire Force and the Solders with lots of experiences garnered from the Ebola scourge.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been told that the Ministry of Finance disbursed some money to the Ministry of Health. I think this House has to approve certain amount for that purpose. If we look at Section 116 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, you will see exactly what I am talking about. We have to do the needful. I want this Parliament to approve a budget for this purpose. Section 116 of the Constitution says: **"Parliament will provide for the establishment of the contingencies fund and for authorising the Minister responsible for Finance, if he is satisfied, that there has arisen an urgent and unforeseen need for expenditure for which no other provision exists, to make advance from the fund to meet that need."** This House should approve a budget, Mr Speaker. My colleagues on the other side are talking about accountability and what I have just said is straightforward. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for reminding us.

**HON. SAMUEL G. PANDA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank the ministers, deputy ministers and the Bank Governor for their briefings about their preparedness for this pestilent that is about to befall us. My Constituency borders with Guinea, Sowa in Kono and Luawa in Kailahun. Our borders are so porous that it is like what the Military call 'pre-emptive measures' to avert this pestilent. I want to remind this House that we do not have enough equipment to test those entering the country through these border posts; and as a result, it is very difficult to ascertain the health conditions of people. We do not have enough thermometers to examine people's temperature along these border crossing points.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we speak, there are no means of examining those crisscrossing the border crossing points. Mr Speaker, in the event somebody with the virus enters this country, it will be catastrophic. At the moment, we are in a position of waiting to see if the Virus will come, but I pray that this will not happen. We have had a calamity before and that is why we should be preparing for preventive action. We should start closing our borders with Guanine and Liberia because with the ban on air traveling, most people who want to take the risk of traveling will do so by land. If somebody wants to visit Sierra Leone from far away countries, they will tend to go through Liberia and Guinea. So, with the wisdom of this Parliament, we can influence the Executive to close our borders as soon as possible. We do not have to wait for this pestilent to befall us before we take action. I am sure closing the borders is the best option we have now. If we allow this pestilent to enter Sierra Leone, we have no defence because we are not prepared for it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that our Economy is not strong to deal with this Virus. We do not have the resources and we debated the Disaster Management Plan a couple of weeks ago and that Agency is now needed. However, do you think Sierra Leone will be able to fund this Agency? This is because we should not wait for a disaster to happen before we approach our donors. I am sure such Agency should be provided with funds reserved for national disasters. Our porous borders are

not adequately protected. I have only two police officers in my Chiefdom, which has about ten border crossing points. Mr Speaker, majority of our people travel on a daily basis to Guinea. Some Sierra Leoneans have farms in Guinea, but they are living in Sierra Leone and some are living in Guinea, but have farms in Sierra Leone. We need adequate test kits. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. We have now reached the convenient point at which we can invite the responsible ministers to respond to the concerns and observations raised by Honourable Members in the course of this debate. We will start with the Minister of Local Government.

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

**MR TAMBA LAMINA [Minister of Local Government]:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is gratifying to witness this debate which is centred on Coronavirus. As stated yesterday, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development is pivotal in the prevention strategy of the Government. I have listened to comments, observations and recommendations from esteemed Members of Parliament and I will respond to some of the comments they have made. There was a comment relating to Regent Chiefs, stating that they have outlived their usefulness because of prolonged staying. That is true and again there is willingness on the part of Government to conduct elections in all vacant chiefdoms. However, I have told many media houses and other organisations that there are two problems limiting the conduct of those elections. The first problem is the availability of funds. You would agree with me that the cost of conducting elections in these chiefdoms ranges from **Le164mln** to **Le200mln** per chiefdom. It is a huge amount of money. As we speak, there are 41 De-amalgamated chiefdoms vacancies existing and we also have 12 other chiefdoms, which are old chiefdoms to be controlled by Paramount Chiefs. I will leave you to calculate the amount of money we need to conduct those elections. I am sure we would need approximately **Le5bln** to conduct those elections.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second problem relates to the TA lists that were 'over-subscribed.' The Deputy Minister and I looked at all the TA lists to see how they

conformed to what happened previously. This is because if you have de-amalgamated chiefdom, then you will be expecting a pill off, rather than a multiplication of the whole; i.e., there should be division. So, you should have a smaller number rather than a bigger number [even more than when the chiefdom was amalgamated]. We are working alongside NEC to resolve these issues. Again, if there are issues relating to Regent Chiefs or concerns about Regent Chiefs, we would expect Honourable Members of Parliament to bring those issues to our attention and we will look at the issues. Of course, it is not a satisfactory situation to have Regent Chiefs who have gone beyond the one year stipulated time, but this is what we have at the moment. We are working very closely with NEC to make sure we conduct the elections moving forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a suggestion about talking to traditional healers and to bring them on board. Of course, they will be critical and we intend to bring them on board. They are part of this process and whatever bye-laws are made in the local communities, they will be the key stakeholders in those local communities. So, they will be part of the process. Of course, localising the strategies, the byelaws that were used to combat the Ebola Virus are still applicable. We do not need to reinvent these byelaws at all because similar approaches will be taken. What we need is to have a technical team to validate these bye-laws to suit the current situation. The budget is being prepared and we are trying to solicit funds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard parliamentarians wanting to be part of this process. There is no denying of the fact that Members of Parliament are very critical. I am sure parliamentarians are already involved because we are having this debate. You invited us to come and update you on Government preparedness and this means you are involved. I said yesterday that you are critical and pivotal to whatever happens in your communities to ensure that the preventive measures are in place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there were issues relating to Okada riders who are still transporting people and goods across the borders. I am convinced that this will be considered as part of the byelaws. We want to see whether that can be included in the byelaws. I think those were the comments raised by Honourable Members. Our

Ministry will always be available for suggestions not necessarily being called to Parliament. We are always opened to parliamentarians for suggestions, so as to make us effective and efficient in running the Ministry. I thank you for your attention.

**THE SPEAKER:** I would like on behalf of the House to thank the Honourable Minister of Local Government for his briefing. I will now invite the Minister of Internal Affairs.

**MR LAHAI L. LEEMA [*Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs*]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for inviting our Ministry to come and inform you how prepared we are for us to respond to the Corona outbreak that is affecting other nations, including developed nations that are grappling with the disease. I gave random presentation yesterday regarding our preparedness to prevent the disease from entering Sierra Leone. I have tried as best as possible to summarise the various concerns under a particular question from the Leader of the NGC, asking that if I am to advise His Excellency the President, what will be the triggers to invoke Section 29? Well, from all deliberations, I guess from the Speaker himself and other Honourable Members might have spoken my mind. However, to deepening your understanding, I would also want to bring some of the issues I would advise His Excellency the President to consider an invocation of Section 29.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the first point is that we have to consider the fact that the disease has been tagged by the World Health Organisation as a pandemic. This means it is affecting the World and by extension a global threat. It is affecting the movements of people and goods. The disease has come very close to us and our neighbouring countries are now affected by this outbreak. Therefore, if it has been declared as pandemic, then it poses threat and that threat seems to be what I will say a 'foreign invasion.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next question is that do we have laws that will also give us the right to take measures that will prevent the outbreak? Yes, we have a law. What is that law? One of the triggers is Section 29 because Section 29 makes provisions on how Government can consider invoking that provision, outlining the

circumstances Government will consider. If you consider Section 29[1b] and [2b], these are parameters that will give Government the leverage to consider invoking Section 29 because if you look at [2b], it is saying 'if Sierra Leone is in imminent danger of foreign invasion.' The question is do we consider this pandemic as a 'foreign invasion?' It is an alien disease that we have not got the knowledge to tackle it at all. We have seen developed countries that have advanced medical systems grappling with this disease. I have learnt from you that it kills people in places like Italy in every ten minutes. So, considering the imminent danger it poses, especially when our neighbouring countries have started recording cases of the Virus. Again, our borders are very porous and these are all factors. When I mentioned the Blue Border, I was referring to the sea and the river area in the south. We are very vulnerable; and as we speak, Government has an estimated budget and we are still working within that budget. We cannot go outside the budget to tackle this particular disease. So, if Government considers going outside that Budget, then we require certain extraordinary measures to be able to see how best we can allocate it. I also consider other factors like Government would want to consider setting up a taskforce because different institutions would want to contribute in order to combat this disease.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Minister, I do not wish to interrupt, but I think it is always important that the legal basis is clearly defined for the President to act under Section 29. I would want to draw your attention to Section 29 [2e&f], rather than the ones in the paragraph you referred to.

**MR LAHAI L. LEEMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am not an expert, but just trying to suggest here. I thank you for that correction. Mr Speaker, the Virus has been considered a pandemic, a disease that is very close to us because it is in the neighbouring countries. I am sure declaring a State of Public Health Emergency will give Government the upper hand to set up the Taskforce that will put these different institutions that have designed roles and strategies to respond to this disease. I am sure both public and private sectors will now have coordinated work plan to stratify this special Taskforce that will be set up to look at Administration and Operations. This is

because they will be able to come up with estimated cost that will be presented to Government, so that Government will know exactly what to do. If we have to tackle this disease, what do we need to put in place?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, invoking Section 29 will also save Government the stress of coming to Parliament to seek for the approval of certain measures, especially when we consider democratic bureaucracies in terms of taking certain decisions. Again, invoking Section 29 will help Government to declare a state of Public Health Emergency and this will enable Government to respond swiftly to changing situations. If we decide to leave it until we record a case, especially when Parliament is about to proceed on recess, we will be in a messy situation. The question is what if within the period Parliament is on recess and we record a case? We are not praying for that to happen, but we have to expect the unexpected. If that happens, when will Parliament converge to discuss such issues? Government will be constrained to move swiftly to take certain decisions because it would not have the legitimate backing without the approval of Parliament. A Member of Parliament said we have to assume as if we are in the battle already and that statement is as essential as preparedness itself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the need for us to declare a state of Public Health Emergency that will encapsulate the initial measures that will be considered is very pertinent, so as to heighten our preparedness or response mechanism to tackle the disease. This is because it will save the Government the stress of coming to Parliament to seek for approval or clarifications, which perhaps, if we fail to do it now and proceed on recess, we do not know whether to bring you back will involve protocols or bureaucracy. To me, that will slow down Government to swiftly take certain measures to tackle the pandemic. However, I am sure with the declaration of a state of Public Health Emergency, it will help Government to put resources together, so as to respond to any outbreak. We will need medical equipment at the border areas and so as to put contingency measures to see how much we are able to tackle this disease.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the disease disturbed China, but they were able to tackle it in Wuhan Province, where it was discovered. They tried as best as possible to



fight the disease and that was how they prevented the need from taken patients to diagnostic centres, which would have also affected their citizens to the danger the disease poses. If we declare a state of Public Health Emergency, which will give Government the upper hand to put resources together in order to set up a Taskforce that will comprise of various institutions, it will ensure focus and concentration, and Government will be able to move swiftly and act on any situation that will need emergency response. These are some of issues Government needs to consider and we have to declare a state of Public Health Emergency. We should not wait until the disease enters Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think I have exhausted most of the issues raised by Members of Parliament. The issue of porous borders was also mentioned, but what we are doing at the moment to tackle the disease is to partner with Local Government and engage the Paramount Chiefs, Section Chiefs or Town Chiefs, Councillors and Tribal Heads to see how we can sensitise the people. They will also provide the necessary security needed. However, do they have the equipment like thermometers to test people? If they have thermometers, do they have the skills to use them? So, the Ministry of Health will be required to train people and take these medical kits at the local level, especially at the border areas or porous border areas. We have to engage the local communities and that will require funds to purchase the required equipment. This will also help for accountability mechanisms because if we have a centralised body to coordinate these activities with an estimated cost, it will help to track expenditure pattern.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some concerns were raised around the work of the NCRA. Well, I would like to state here that I am the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; and as a result, I cannot say anything that will not allay your fears nor will I say anything that will be worrisome. So, I have noted this concern and I will inform my boss accordingly, so that we can share our views with the Director of NCRA. I am however certain that the NCRA will help us to track down those entering Sierra Leone, if they want to enter Sierra Leone through contact tracing. It is also my view

that concurrent activities are paramount, especially when you look at the importance of the work of certain institutions. However, that is not to say I am making any statement regarding the concerns you have because I have not reported to my boss.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for inmates in the Correctional Centres, they brought their preparedness plan. For instance, inmates are judicially quarantined and we are trying to provide sanitary kits. Again, for the new people who will be sent to remand or prison, we will make sure that they are properly screened before they are taken there. I guess so far I have been able to address most of the concerns you have raised regarding the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that the Ministry has requested Ministry of Finance to disburse approximately **Le500mln** to enable us go to the field to see how our agencies are doing. We have an estimated budget which we want to work within to help us tackle the overall security problem. Mr Speaker, this is the view I have regarding the declaration of a state of Public Health Emergency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude on the point that people are worried and if we declare a state of Public Health Emergency, it may lead to closing the borders. I think I follow extensively how other World leaders have been able to put measures in place. In Canada, for instance, what they did was to restrict the movement of people into Canada, but allow the importation of goods into the country. This is because people are worried about the closure of the borders. We will close the borders to restrict the movement of people, but we will allow goods to be brought into the country. We are going to properly screen those that will be bringing these goods to Sierra Leone. I was made to understand that Sierra Leone Ambassador to Guinea has held a meeting with some of the Guinean authorities in the Immigration in order to ensure that Sierra Leoneans who insist to come to Sierra Leone should provide their personal details. This is to ensure proper record keeping and contact tracing if the individual is suspected of an infection. I want to conclude on those few points I have highlighted in responding to the questions and concerns raised by Honourable Members, especially the issue relating to Section 29. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs for his briefing. I would now call on the last, but by no means least to also respond. In fact, I would regard them as the pivot of all the national activities that have to be undertaken to prevent this scourge from coming into our country. I now invite the Deputy Minister of Health to respond to the concerns expressed by Honourable Members of Parliament.

**DR AMARA JAMBAI** [*Deputy Minister of Health*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you for giving us this opportunity to interact and to broaden our horizon on our preparedness. This is a national issue and we have to be very careful how we react to such situation. Many questions have been asked, but some are repeated questions. I will try as much as possible to go over the issues and answer them as much as possible. I would start with the Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella who moved this Motion for us to come and explain our preparedness to prevent this Virus. He proposed certain recommendations and some of those recommendations will enrich a response plan; and invariably, we will come out of this meeting better prepared to address the Coronavirus issue. I am sure one key commonality of what we have discussing here is lab testing. It seems as if everyone wants a lab in his district and everyone wants to be tested at one point in time. People are screened to find out if they are at risk or not. Well, some of these tests are expensive and you need to capture the individual at the highest point in the period the person is sick, so that you can determine whether the person is infected or not. If you conduct a test on an individual before the person is infected, then it will be a false negative and if the person is infected later, people will start questioning the accuracy of the process. Therefore, we need to conduct the test at the right time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second thing I want to look at is the quantity and availability of the reagents. In fact, countries like the USA and others are struggling to have test kits and that is going to be mass production of testing kits. I am sure we only have access to about 370, but we have a window of opportunities where we could be given approximately 20,000 and we will get that through the African Union [AU] and the channels are now been created for us to access that gift.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a question on the Rapid Deployable Treatment Facilities [RDTF]. You would agree with me that after the Ebola scourge, we were able to get a 30 bed Unit at 34 Military Hospital. You would agree with me that 34 Military Hospital is pivotal in our response and as knock-on effect, many of the apparatuses we were using during the Ebola fight are still available, but very old. One of them is the RDTF and it is very old. We have to replace it at all cost. However, that was a methodology to rapidly deploy a treatment facility anywhere in the country, especially areas with many cases. So, we have the 30 bed Unit and we may need to replicate it somewhere. The required staff are almost ready. We have tested them several times for their readiness and it is part of preparedness we are talking about. It is done in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. There were recommendations for the inclusion of Members of Parliament. However, if we allow all of you to go to your constituencies at the same time, you may take along varying messages to your people and you may even give the wrong messages. So, we have to be very careful. Mr Speaker, we need to sit and dialogue with you, so that we can give you current messages. We do not want a situation where we rush to meet our people like what happened during the Ebola scourge. Some people said that Ebola was not a killer disease and that was a bad message. We got it wrong, but now we will come with colleagues from the Health Education Department and the Ministry of Information to give you the right information so that you can take them home.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue relating to the utilisation of **Le1bln** has come out very strongly. As the saying goes, when money is usually mentioned, people become uneasy and their adrenalin come up. What happens in Sierra Leone nowadays is that we have to be mindful of the fact that vast majority of people are good, but we still have few who are bad. However, when money is given to an institution, people become focused. Mr Speaker, during the Ebola period, we had the real time audit and this means people are prudent in managing resources. So, our response mood to using resources is slowed down because the Sierra Leonean nature is affecting us. It is affecting the entire system because everyone who handles money will want to know

what the person is going to do with the money. However, we have to be mindful of the fact that majority of us are good and that the bad ones are very few. This is what I can say about the money in question. That money was meant for the quarantined homes and it has been used. You would agree with me that activities relating to quarantined homes are very expensive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are two forms of quarantine: we have the managed quarantined whereby we put people in locations and it is guided quarantined. As we speak, one of your colleagues is on his way from Ghana and he wants to be granted a guided quarantined. There are people applying for guided quarantined and some of them prefer to occupy the back of their houses. They prefer to die alone without infecting their children. If you apply for a guided quarantined and preferred to be quarantined at the back of your house, you have to make sure that you do not interact with your family members because at the end of the day, if you are tested positive for the Virus, then your entire family will be at risk. For instance, during the Ebola scourge, a lady left Waterloo and went to Malama. She was very rich and she infected thirty-eight [38] people, and all of them died because she was the breadwinner. It is natural for family members to take care of the breadwinner if he/she falls sick and that was what exactly happened to this family. If the father falls sick, family will continue to come close and take care of him. So, if we provide a managed quarantined system, we have to guide people on what to do and what not to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the managed quarantined that is on-going is not the best for us because of the resource involved. In fact, the people in Lungi find it very difficult to give their places for fear of infecting others. Some say if they give their places, their businesses will collapse. So, people are increasing prices of their places higher than ever. We had a lot of resistance and some of us personally went there to negotiate with them. The Ministry of Health takes care of patients. We are not hoteliers and this means we do not manage hotels and this is why we encountered difficulties in managing these facilities at the initial stage. However, we have decided to bring on board people who are trained to manage these facilities. Therefore, managed

quarantined will improve and my sister was asking when we will be safe. Well, if aircrafts stop tomorrow and secure our borders properly, we can say after fourteen [14] days starting from tomorrow, we will relax a bit. However, we have to monitor ourselves and we have to be very conscious of who comes in and who goes out. If somebody travels from a place that is hyperaemic to the disease prone area, then we need to monitor that person and make sure that person watches himself.

Me Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody asked the whereabouts of the ambulances. I want to state here that we have ambulances. As we speak, we have ambulances in Lungi, Port Loko and Kambia. These ambulances are positioned around quarantined houses or hotels to take care of any confirmed case. If there are confirmed cases, the patients will be easily brought to the 34 Military Hospital. We are using the 34 Military Hospital as the point for the first case.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Kenya Airways arrived, we were ready to receive our first case at 34 Military Hospital. Therefore, 34 Military Hospital will be the place where we will conduct treatment for any confirmed case. The capacity of that hospital is about 30 beds and we also have a crash ward at Lungi, and we have converted it into a treatment unit. As of now, we have various ministries on board. I want to remind this House that this is a pandemic and the first case will come as a pandemic. So, we are not going to be in the regular mood of work. Usually, we say an outbreak or an epidemic, but when it becomes bigger, we call a disaster. As we speak, what we have now is a pandemic and our reaction is going to be totally different. If we have one confirmed case, we are going directly to level one. I am sure when the first case is confirmed, we will go to the next level and this was what the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs was saying. We cannot conduct tests at every district. Mr Speaker, during the Ebola scourge, we had about 14 labs. I think we started with one and went as far as having fourteen [14] labs. However, that number dropped to nine [9] labs; and as we speak, the number further dropped to three [3] labs. I think we have to start somewhere, Mr Speaker. We are still using some of these facilities that are available. A sample could be collected in Kailahun and brought to Freetown within twenty [24]

hours and can still be tested. The testing time is between three and half to four hours before the result is out. People are ready to do extra work and to make sure that we do not accumulate specimen over time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have partners who are working with us remotely as of now. For instance, we still have WHO and we are still working with WHO. In fact, in the next twenty [20] minutes, we shall go to State House to present a plan to the President. Therefore, everyone needs to come on board. The Honourable Hassan A. Sesay was talking about similar situation and we need to come together and make sure we defeat the enemy. You would agree with me that community action defeated the Ebola disease. Sometimes when the problem becomes insurmountable, take it to the people because the people always have solutions. Again, this is the time we should start going to our people for a change in their behaviours. If we change our behaviours, we can do a lot in terms of minimising the spread of the disease. I have started a modelling methodology and the first thing they wanted us to do was to bring England model. I however disagreed because the conditions are different and England is different. I said we have to take Nigeria as example because Nigeria has already recorded two cases and it ended there. So their conditions are better off and we are doing mathematical modelling of cases. If we take the English type modelling, everyone will run away because the things in that model are not the same.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that diseases in every environment tend to be different and the way we handle diseases also tend to be different. A seasonal influenza appears during a specific season. Therefore, what we call seasonal and acute respiratory syndrome comes and goes away and that is why people are saying this disease will come and disappear, and will come again and disappear because it is a seasonal influenza. Well, we hope it will not appear again. There was H1 and N1 seasonal influenza. It came, but it never came to Sierra Leone. I am not saying this will not come again, but we have to be very optimistic that it will not come again. We have to give the necessary support to the ministries that are involved in this fight and we will see how it goes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not know if I have answered all your questions, but we have been here for a while now. I want to thank you very much because you have created a platform for us to interact and enrich our document, which we can take forward.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Mr Minister, in as much as you have done your submission, there are however areas we should also concern about because there was a release that was out not too long ago and we wanted to measure certain areas in terms of the border. I am close to the border, but I have seen Members discussing... - *[Interruption]*.

**HON. SIDIE .M. TUNIS:** Mr Chief Whip, you should interact directly with the Minister.

**HON. ALUSINE KANNEH:** Mr Speaker, this is about the release that came out concerning the Okada riders and the taxi drivers and Poda Poda drivers from the Ministry of Transport and Aviation in terms of how many passengers they should take. I want to know if you are in contact with this Ministry in terms of collaboration to make sure that it is effective. I thank you.

**DR AMARA JAMBAI:** Well, we have held a two day deliberation for us to package an integrated plan and we are in partnership with everyone concerned. Again, somebody asked when one is infected. The person also asked something about transmission. It takes two to fourteen days for the symptoms to manifest. The middle point is about five days, which means that by the time you are about five days, you will start showing signs of the virus. So, it can be any time from fifth day onwards. So, if the average is five days, but you do a test on day two, you are going to be negative. You will start showing positive on day five.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have noticed that the number of people who have recovered is not equal to those who have had the disease or dead. Therefore, this is telling you that there are many more people who have the virus in their system, but are not considered as having recovered. You would agree with me that during the Ebola scourge, two types of tests were administered before you are declared negative. We



have a similar situation, but it is not as effective as the one we had during the Ebola. As I said earlier, this is influenza and is highly transmissible. We can contract the disease through surfaces because when somebody sneezes or breathes, the droplets will remain on the surface of an object for some time and when somebody touches that surface, there is tendency to contract the Virus. Our hands are so attached to our faces that we touch our noses and other parts of our faces frequently and that is how we can contract the Virus. People are advised not to stay very close and that is why they keep a distance of one metre. Droplets from our mouths and noses stay on the surfaces of objects and when one touches them, the person is in trouble. That is why the numbers are increasing. You would agree with me that Ebola is not as transmissible as this one. However, what makes a disease a killer disease is mortality. We are saying Coronavirus kills more than Ebola, but Ebola kills over **50%** of its victims. This House would agree with me that the rate of transmission of the Coronavirus is higher than Ebola, but Ebola kills more than the Coronavirus.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody wanted to know about immunity. Well, when someone recovers, the person gains or induces immunity by vaccination. It is real that you have a viral disease and you do not have any sort of immunity in it. You always gain immunity and that is why viruses are good *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, on your behalf, I would like to extend special thanks to the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation for the briefings they have provided to this House. It is now my duty to summarise the conclusions of the debate. Honourable Members underscored the non-political or non-partisan nature of this debate. This is a matter of national interest and that has been underscored by every speaker who took the Floor on this matter and I want to believe I can safely present to you two paragraphs in the form of a conclusion of the debate. In the first place, Parliament stand ready and willing to support the Government in its proactive effort to prevent the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic from entering Sierra Leone, including in particular any decision to declare a state of Public Health Emergency under Section 29 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Secondly, Honourable Members, Parliament hereby establishes a special Parliamentary Committee on the Coronavirus pandemic consisting of the following Honourable Members:

1. Hon. Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella, Chairman;
2. Hon. Neneh Lebbie;
3. Hon. Josephine Makieu;
4. Hon. Dickson M. Rogers;
5. Hon. Veronica K. Sesay;
6. Hon. Emilia L. Tongi;
7. Hon. Daniel B. Koroma;
8. Hon. Aiah D. S. Kassegbama;
9. Hon. Dr Abdulai Sesay;
10. Hon. Foday M. Kamara;
11. Hon. Rugiatu R. Kanu;
12. Hon. Saa Paul; and
13. Hon. PC Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III.

Honourable Members, the terms of reference of this Committee I had to follow up and coordinate all parliamentary solidarity with the Government in its efforts to combat the Coronavirus with a view to preventing it entering Sierra Leone.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 34. I was thinking that for the first paragraph we just target the end, for not more than ninety days.

**THE SPEAKER:** Very well, Honourable Member.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** I believe we should have a timeframe.

**THE SPEAKER:** For a period not exceeding ninety [90] days.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** The emergency has to be specific. It is a Public Health Emergency.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, I will read it again, Honourable Members. Parliament stand ready and willing to support the Government in its proactive effort to prevent the threat of the

Coronavirus pandemic from entering Sierra Leone, including in particular any decision to declare a state of Public Health Emergency under Section 29 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone for a period not exceeding ninety [90] days. The second point deals with the establishment of a special parliamentary committee and I have just read the membership of that Committee.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I want to know the stage we will be wrapping up. This is because there are few issues that came up and I want to add to that list for specificity like the closure of the Airport. The Ministry of Social Welfare has stopped Sunday Service, Juma Prayers and Seventh day Adventist prayers. It would have been better for us to have referred to congregational prayers because there are some services these nowadays.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do you want us to go into the specifics?

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** No, Mr Speaker. I was just trying to advise them because we have Sunday, Monday and Wednesday services nowadays. Again, we have Juma prayers and night prayers. Therefore, I want the Ministry to consider this later and take appropriate decision. I also want us to include specifically the pending NCRA activities. Those activities have to be put on hold until we address this issue.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Leader, you and I discussed that issue and I gave you assurance that I would discuss with the Executive. I will discuss this issue with the President if it is interfering with the fight against Coronavirus. We will ensure that the process is put on hold, but Parliament cannot take a decision on that issue at all.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** No, we can, Mr Leader.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** I cannot support that, Mr Speaker.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** I agree with what the Leader has said. We spoke yesterday and he said he was going to consult and that was why I pulled back yesterday. I am not talking about the entire Parliament, which is what I will wish for, but that is our position as Opposition Members of Parliament. We want that to be included because that is our position. This is for the interest of the people of Sierra

Leone and I want this to be recorded. Mr Speaker, I am saying this for the records and if anything happens tomorrow, the records will show that Members of the Opposition once advised the Government on this issue.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to observe that what I have decided to do about these two paragraphs is to capture what I believe to be the consensus across the isles following the wide ranging discussions we had yesterday and today. I recall in the course of your presentation today in this House, the Leader of the Opposition drew our attention to the fact that he had addressed a letter to the President specifically on that matter. I would have thought perhaps since you have done so, we should now wait to see the reaction of the Executive to that letter.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much for that suggestion, but let me make some clarifications. It is agreed that those two positions are based on the consensus of this House, but for the records... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Outside of these two paragraphs?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** I said if that is not the consensus of the House, our position as Members of the Opposition is for the NCRA to suspend their pending activities because activities have been temporarily suspended *[Applause]*.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** Mr Speaker, we have had very fruitful debates these two days and we have genuinely been non-political and non-partisan. If we are postponing WAEC exams for kids who have studied for months and parents have paid fees for their children, we have to do the needful as well. We stopped flights and we have also advised ourselves to stop touching each other. We are so scared that we have also stopped biometric registration *[Applause]*. If we have also even gone to the extent of suspending congregational prayers, why do you think we should not temporarily suspend the NCRA's activities for the next thirty to sixty days? We can even put a time limit for the suspension of NCRA's activities. What we want at the moment is

to contain the Coronavirus. I am sure thirty or more days of pause will not disrupt the registration process. Mr Leader of Government Business, this is just an appeal.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Leader, I thought you have completed your submission.

**HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA:** We have decided to be praying at our homes to avoid contacts. I want to appeal to the Government to think about this issue. I am sure parliamentarians can take that decision as a way of helping the President *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to understand one thing, the discussion that is taking place now does not derogate in any way from these two paragraphs' conclusion. If that is so, I want a clear indication from the House.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Mr Speaker, we agreed with you and I understand where you are moving towards, but please let us discuss the third issue I have just proposed and supported by my colleague before we conclude.

**THE SPEAKER:** The third what?

**HON. CHERNOR .R.M BAH:** Mr Speaker, I raised an issue regarding a possible suspension registration.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, Honourable Member. I thought the consensus around this House has been adequately captured in these two paragraphs; but for the records, you went on to indicate further interest on your side that the two would be clearly indicated in the records, outside of these two paragraphs.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, during my submission yesterday, I informed this Honourable House that I was going to consult His Excellency the President on the issue relating to NCRA. However, I also know that for the past four weeks, the Opposition, especially the APC has been criticising Government on the issue relating to the NCRA. Well, I want to appeal to my colleagues Honourable Members to keep politics out of this issue. I want to assure Honourable Mohamed Bangura and this Honourable House that I will consult the President on this issue. If NCRA's activities will undermine our efforts

to fight the Coronavirus, Government will ensure that they suspend those activities. I assured this Honourable House yesterday and I still stand by it. I thank you.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the Leader of Government Business, I said in this House that indeed we spoke yesterday and he was going to consult yesterday. We also have a right to decide on this issue as a Parliament. We are here to make laws and to do our work. If there are things that want to affect our people, it is also incumbent upon us to do what we are expected to do. I am not talking for myself.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, let me remind the House that in the past two days, various speakers placed primacy on the imperative of protecting the lives of the people of this country; therefore, my focus in presenting this consensus document is exclusively on the issue of the Coronavirus. Honourable Members, we have to be clear in our minds because if the life of this nation is under threat by the Coronavirus pandemic, it means the issue needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency and that has prompted us for this special meeting. I am sure that does not prejudice the concerns you have expressed on the other issue, but let us single this Coronavirus pandemic issue out of the political divide.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I like people who are sincere and we need to be very sincere with ourselves.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, I am sure we are all sincere.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** That is what I am saying because we started this issue in Committee Room 1.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member. We have agreed here that the issue about the Coronavirus pandemic is a non-political issue.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** That is very clear, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** We are going to approach it in that way, Honourable Member.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, you would agree with me that before we went to Committee Room 1, there was argument to postpone the registration exercise. We challenged Honourable Members on the other side. We said the NCRA was created by an Act of Parliament and we should allow them to do their work. They are sincere and are ready to serve the nation. I am sure if they think that there is a problem with that registration exercise, they will stop the process.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, that is not correct.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** We are not going to allow you to obstruct the process. We will ensure that the registration process takes place as planned. You cannot stop us because we are in governance. As far as this registration process is concerned, your different motives will have to put the records straight.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** That statement is unfortunate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, please take your seats and observe decorum. You have to speak through the Speaker.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, I was still talking when they obstructed me.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, I did not give you the Floor. I came to the House with two statements to try and encapsulate the consensus in this House on a specific issue, which is the Coronavirus. I said the Virus' threat is real to our country because the neighbouring countries have already recorded cases of their own. Fortunately, it has not appeared in Sierra Leone and that is what we have spent the last two days discussing. Honourable Members, having spent two days on this specific issue, it will be good for the public to know the outcome of our deliberations. This is why in my own humble way I try to capture the consensus in these two paragraphs. This does not mean that if there is any other Member who has a burning desire to have another issue captured by the records. Are we now rejecting this consensus document?

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I will pretend not to have heard what the Deputy Leader of Government Business said. Mr Speaker, this perception that is been created is also not good for the public consumption. I have said it times without

number that the issues we have with the NCRA politically still stands even after the Coronavirus. You referred us to what transpired in Committee Room 1. Those issues still stand, Mr Speaker. We are advocating for the declaration of a Public Health Emergency and schools, Churches and Mosques have been temporarily closed, public exams are being postponed and Members of Parliament have stopped using the biometric registering machine. I am therefore saying that if we allow the NCRA to go ahead with the registration exercise, then there is no need to suspend public exams or close down religious gatherings. I think this has been my point, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, let me try another rendition of Paragraph 1. May I have the attention of all of us, please. Paragraph 1 will read as follows: **"Parliament stands ready and willing to support the Government in his proactive effort to prevent the threat of the Coronavirus pandemic from entering Sierra Leone."** We will make no reference whatsoever to the State of Public Health Emergency. First of all we do not have that power, i.e., the power under Section 29 is vested only and solely in Mr President. Therefore, we shall deal with that issue when it is brought here. Section 29 goes without saying that even where the President alone makes that declaration, that declaration has validity for a very limited period because it has to come to Parliament for approval. Please read Sub-Section 3.

**HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III:** Mr Speaker, I have listened to the various arguments and everybody is concerned. People are worried in the sense that we do not know even what the future holds for what is going on in the world. What we are doing here is guessing and we are a very poor and backward nation. The facilities in terms of the human resource are limited. I did not want to raise it when I was debating yesterday or contributing to this valuable presentation. We are talking about health, but this Parliament has no water and our toilets smell. In fact, we do not even have soap, and towels. We are talking about, but we cannot wash your hands because there is no water and soap. I bet anybody to go to these toilets and see for themselves. When I wanted to urinate just now, I had to go to town because we do not have water and soap. So, if all of us are worried, I will want to appeal to every one of us, including the



Deputy Leader of Government Business, to ensure that we stop the Coronavirus from entering Sierra Leone [*Applause*]. We have debated this issue and it is now in the records of this Parliament. The Hansard are there for future reference. It is now in the records that many people from the Opposition side are in support of a state of Public Health Emergency. If they do not do it or the party in power fails to do it and all of the sudden something goes wrong, we know the consequence. I spoke on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and the records are there for reference purposes. I would like all of us to go along with what the Speaker has proposed. Those who want the President to declare a State of Public Health Emergency should stop the registration exercise by writing a letter. It is very simple to write a letter and I will sign it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to be logical in the way we discuss issues. Mr Speaker, you have been consulting and we have to resolve. Mr Speaker, we have to prepare resolutions and we vote for what is good. I will not move a Motion at all. People should write a resolution. I accept what the Speaker is saying, but I also accept what you are saying. This is Parliament and when we disagree, we have to put it in the form of resolution. I am sure those of us who will vote for declaration of the State of Emergency will do so.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, with your leave, you have gradually agreed with me that when I was making my submission today, I made reference to the Motion that is already on the Floor. I said that the underlined reasons for that Motion are completely different. Now, the underlined reasons for the Motion bothers on civil and political rights of citizens and non-citizens, but what we are talking about bothers on the right to life. So, out of good faith and in the interest of progress, I did not invoke S.Os.15 [2]. If I would have invoked S.Os.15 [4], it would have been a different thing, but I refused because we want this Parliament to proceed on this platform.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that this bothers on the right of people's lives. There are people living outside Sierra Leone who would want to come and register, but the temporal ban on flights will not allow them at all. Again, we have those in quarantined homes for fourteen [14] days and if the registration exercise

takes place in the provinces, it will last for eight [8] days. We know that people are usually quarantined for 14 days and they will not participate except they break the rules. That is out of good faith I restrain myself and I did not invoke S.Os.15 [4].

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, let us not repeat what we have already said here. You have made your brilliant contribution and I immediately supported your position to the extent that I even said you are a man of wisdom. I also said our focus should be on the Virus that is threatening the life of our country right now and any other issue is extraneous and should be dealt with differently.

**HON.DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, it should not be dealt with differently.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, it should be dealt with separately. You have a pending Motion before the House which I have acknowledged. The Leader of the Opposition also informed this House of a letter he had written to His Excellency the President on the same issue. I am a bit confused here.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Let me help you sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** First of all from the inception of this debate, we agreed to keep politics out of this issue.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** That is what I did.

**THE SPEAKER:** But what is happening now is politics.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Well, the response of the Deputy Leader of Government Business was not appealing at all.

**HON. HASSAN A. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I want to say something.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I suspend further discussions on this matter until further notice.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to add item V on the Order Paper, which has to do with 'Laying of Papers by the Minister of Finance.

#### **IV. PAPERS LAID**

DR PATRICIA N. LAVARLEY

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE,

THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, 2020

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, the leader consulted us and we agreed because of its importance. However, I want to add that we have also agreed to look at this document after it is laid. The Ministry of Finance should find time to take us through before the twenty one twenty-one [21] days period. This is a very important document and we are ready to support it if it is in the interest of the people *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** I take that to be a seconder.

**DR PATRICIA LAVARLEY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

[i] The Public Procurement Regulations 2020; and

[ii] The Public Procurement Act of 2016 and the Statutory Instrument No. 15 of 2020.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I just want you to confirm to all of us here whether the third item is part of that Paper. If it is part of it, I am sure the Paper is not conclusive until the next adjourned date.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** No, it is a suggestion you made.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Indeed, Mr Speaker, everything there is suggestion. Mr Leader of Government Business, you are confusing me.

**8HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** The two were agreed upon, Honourable Member.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** No, we have not agreed.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** In that case, we had a debate and we have not even agreed whether we need a resolution.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Leader, there is no debate in the world without a conclusion. Honourable Member, have you concluded?

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** What we needed was briefing from the Executive. We have heard briefings from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Sanitation, Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. After these briefings, we debated it and they have reacted. We do not have to have a resolution, but if the Honourable Speaker has decided for a resolution that will be acceptable to us, no problem otherwise we will not accept it.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** It is not the Speaker's decision for us to have a resolution. There is no debate without a conclusion.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** No, I just want to make a correction. I know that every debate has conclusion and it is the two of us that always conclude. We do not need a resolution for every debate.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** There was a resolution from you for the nominees to be approved.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** I think it is the same conclusion we had just now with the reactions from the ministers.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** Mr Speaker, I need your permission to say something.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** The Motion has been carried, Mr Leader of the Opposition.

**THE SPEAKER:** We have to observe the rules of procedure.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** That is it, Mr Speaker. I thank you for reminding us. Mr Speaker asked a question and I rose to add an item before the question. This was why the question was not put. You asked again whether we should finished with the two and leave the third one to be dealt with separately and we said no.

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not have a Motion before me.

**HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH:** You are correct, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let me explain, there is no Motion before the House. If you look at the item on the Order Paper, we asked for a briefing from the relevant MDAs to the House. We cannot continue to sit here all day. Let me just remind Honourable Members that

this is Parliament, which is the law making institution of Government. This country is under threat from the Coronavirus pandemic that is afflicting other parts of the World and that is what motivated us to summon the relevant MDAs for proper briefings. I would have thought the reasonable thing to do, after the briefings, was to have an outcome of our deliberations, not through a Motion. This was why I drafted the two paragraphs, capturing the consensus around the House on the understanding that the entire process was devoid of politics. However, I have started noticing politics into this issue. Therefore, I will suspend consideration of the proposals and adjourn the House.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 4:40 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.]*