



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2022

SESSION – 2021/2022



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022.

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V GOVERNMENT MOTIONS:

A. THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE HEREBY RATIFIES THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 17TH MARCH, 2022.

AGREEMENT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND ISSUANCE OF SECURITIZED MULTI-PURPOSE IDENTITY CARDS (NATIONAL, NON-NATIONAL AND ECOWAS), ID VERIFICATION SYSTEM AND PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE (PKI) NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA) AND CONSTRAT SYSTEMS SL LIMITED.

B. THE MINISTR OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

“BE IT RESOLVED: THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE HEREBY RATIFIES THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENTS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 17TH FEBRUARY, 2022

(a) AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM

OF JORDAN AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE.

(b) BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF

SIERRA LEONE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.

(c) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE AERONAUTICAL AUTHORITIES OF

THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE.

(d) BILATERAL AIR SERVICES AGREEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF

SIERRA LEONE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

(e) MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 22nd March, 2022.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:30a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY 17TH MARCH, 2022

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we shall now go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Thursday 17th March 2022. Pages 1 to 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Can a Member please move for the adoption of the record of votes and proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday 17th March 2022.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. DR. MARK M. KALOKOH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of votes and proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday 17th March 2022 has been adopted as presented].

III PAPERS LAID:

MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

MR REX BONAPHA *[Deputy Minister of Transport and Aviation]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

- i. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique.
- ii. Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Republic of Mozambique.
- iii. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of Iceland.

- iv. Record of Discussions between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of Iceland [*Applause*].

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

A. THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

MR DAVID PANDA NOAH [*The Minister of Internal Affairs*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved:

That this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday 17th March, 2022.

AGREEMENT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND ISSUANCE OF SECURITIZED MULTI-PURPOSE IDENTITY CARDS (NATIONAL, NON-NATIONAL AND ECOWAS), ID VERIFICATION SYSTEM AND PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE (PKI) NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA) AND CONSTRAT SYSTEMS SL LIMITED.

Purpose and brief description: The National Civil Registration Act, 2016 which establishes the National Civil Registration Authority [NCRA], provides for the compulsory registration of citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone as well as providing the registrants with a multi-purposes identity card. The Act, further empowers NCRA to register all civil status events occurring in Sierra Leone including registering birth, adoptions, marriages, divorce and death among others, throughout Sierra Leone. The National Identification Number [NIN] is an eight [8] digit unique non-duplicating non-reusable and non-transferable identifier that is assigned to every resident; citizen or non-citizen from birth or at registration after being enrolled into the National Identity Management System [NIMS] and data replicated. The NIN is a logical system generated unique identifier from birth to death containing alphanumeric access already being used as official identification for citizens and residents accessing public and private services. Currently, the use of NIN number is mandatory for recruitment into the civil or public service in Sierra Leone since the payroll was sanitized in 2018; also, it is used for business registration: NRA, NASSIT, SLRSA etcetera.

Since the registration exercises commenced in 2017, the NCRA has registered about **5.9Mln** persons resident in Sierra Leone and all are assigned the unique identifier number [NIM]. All persons registered in Sierra Leone are assigned with a unique NIN for use during their lifetime. The NIN is assigned and issued to persons that are registered and are resident in-country as by law, including citizens and foreign nationals as well as those with dual citizenship. The NCRA has successfully concluded the procurement process for engagement of the services of a reputable and qualified company CONSTRAT SYSTEMS SL Ltd; on a 15 year agreement for the production of securitised multipurpose national and ECOWAS compliance cheap-based identity cards for citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone as well as to provide ID verification system and public key infrastructure.

The key features of the agreement include:

- a. Setting up of a decentralised identity card production infrastructure
- b. Capacity building of NCRA staff on ID card production and management of the infrastructure.
- c. Production of cheap-based securitized multipurpose national ID cards for persons aged 12 years and above with no ECOWAS features.
- d. Production of ECOWAS compliant ID cards that would be issued on demand.
- e. Support and maintenance of the ID card production infrastructure
- f. Development and management of an ID verification system to ease EID verification services.
- g. Development and management of a Public Key Infrastructure [PKI] for verification of electronic documents.

Types of ID cards to be produced includes as per agreement, the following categories:

- i. Sierra Leone national ID card limited to Sierra Leoneans
- ii. ECOWAS ID card, on demand for use within ECOWAS member countries
- iii. Sierra Leone ECOWAS ID card on demand for Sierra Leoneans wishing to travel within ECOWAS member countries consistent with ECOWAS Protocol to promote free movement, integration, trade liberalisation etcetera.

iv. Non-national ID card mandatory for all foreign residents in Sierra Leone

The ID Services: in order to ensure proper identification, authentication using the unique identifier that is the NIN, inscribed on the ID card and demand creation for ID services, the ID card shall be mandatory to access services including; transactions with Financial Institutions, Banks, Forex Bureau, Insurance etcetera.

Vehicle Registrations and Licensing: recruitment into public and private Institutions for consistency for personal information and verification. NASSIT enrolment, land and property registration, enrolment into educational institutions including: public exams, sim cards registration, vital events registration, immigration services, residents and work permits, business registrations and incorporation.

What is the strategic relevance and urgency?

In addition to being the forerunner for the successful implementation of the digital transformation benchmark, Sierra Leone is aspiring towards the production and issuance of national or ECOWAS identity cards and other identity related verification services, will graduate the fundamental human rights of people that is the right to legal identity and the right to be identified and accounted for. These services compliment government's efforts in the Security Sector as articulated in the medium-term development plan 2019 to 2023, as well as being compatible with the Strategic Development Goal [SDGs]. The improved national security as proof of identity will help the government to keep track of all residents including those who might pose a risk to nation's development, prevent identity theft, fraud, and identity manipulation and promote law enforcement goals by ensuring that individuals and criminal suspects will be more easily identified.

Expected benefits and target beneficiaries

Citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone can have their identity legally recognised, and obtain proof of their legal status through valid ID cards. This enables them exercise their civil rights to secure protection against sexual offences on girl child, child labour, early marriage, identity manipulation, impersonation etcetera, by having

proof of identity and other personal details such as age. ID card production will enable citizens to access services such as health care, education, social security, financial transactions and other public services as well to support tax administration and immigration opportunities. It will also ensure accountable delivery of services to the people for whom such services may be specifically targeted. It would improve financial services because money transfers and cash withdrawals by citizens and non-citizens from financial institutions are facilitated by the use of valid ID cards. As government and private sector institutions increasingly process data and provide services electronically linking ID cards with other administrative data bases of public institutions; will enable these institutions to exchange and manage data more efficiently.

The agreement has no negative implications for the population. These services would be available to all eligible persons, logistical arrangements are in place to ensure that all persons are registered, acquire ID cards including persons with physical and other disabilities or challenges. Already about **5.9Mln** persons are in the Identity Management database, which includes persons of voting age. The NCRA has 17 district offices and the civil register is being continuously updated to accommodate those who may not have been previously registered.

Financial implications

Project financing is the sole responsibility of the company. It is a PPP [Public Private Partnership] agreement at no cost to government. The agreement or contract would be executed in accordance with all fiscal concessions and incentives applicable as concurred with the Ministry of Finance. The profit sharing agreement is as follows:

25% to government and 75% to vendor for the first 10 years.

30% to government, and 70% to vendor for the last 5 years.

For the first 10 years, an estimated target population of **4Mln** is envisaged and at a card cost of Le75,000 for each card. For the next 5 years, we are targeting a population of **5Mln** at Le75,000 per card and that would be as I said at the moment, 30% to the government and 70% to the Vendor for the last 5 years.

In order to ensure a seamless process for the issuance of Identification Cards, the NCRA has set up programmes to educate and sensitise the public on the mandate of NCRA for the production and securitised multi-purpose national and ECOWAS compact, cheap-based identity cards for citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone including its related ID services. Information collected from citizens and non-citizens resident in Sierra Leone must be confidential therefore, measures have been put in place to ensure security of data in its handling by private company, access to personal information of all residents in Sierra Leone, is limited to government, NCRA and access will be given to the NCRA for the ID card production project. The NCRA database is well secured, and one of the world's most stable database platforms with high level firewalls, protecting entry and exit into the system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved; that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following agreement, which has just been read and being laid on the Table of the House, on Thursday 17th March, 2022.

AGREEMENT FOR THE PRODUCTION AND ISSUANCE OF SECURITIZED MULTI-PURPOSE IDENTITY CARDS (NATIONAL, NON-NATIONAL AND ECOWAS), ID VERIFICATION SYSTEM AND PUBLIC KEY INFRASTRUCTURE [PKI], NATIONAL CIVIL REGISTRATION AUTHORITY (NCRA) AND CONSTRAT SYSTEMS SL LIMITED.

Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: This is impressive, extremely impressive [*Applause*]. I do not think we have any reason to waste time; but in any case,

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am taking two from either side of the aisle except probably, if Leaders wants to contribute; I will take just two because as far as I know from what we have heard, this should be non-contentious as far as what I have heard, I cannot tell whether other Members were paying attention but from what I heard, this is supposed to be non-contentious. Other ECOWAS countries are far ahead in fact, you do not need to use your passport to travel to ECOWAS countries; because a

passport within the ECOWAS Region is superfluity, so you just need to use your ID card to move around.

But in any case, I would not want to jump into the arena at this point *[Laughter]*. I am just setting the tone of the argument or the debate; so please, please *[Undertone]*. Sometimes I feel like being let down *[Laughter]*. Honourable Members, two from either sides Yes, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, oh sorry, let us hear from the Chairman. After the Chairman, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara [AKK]; after Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara [AKK], the Honourable Member from C4C and then, Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin, and that is the end.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker

THE SPEAKER: Yes

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: This morning again we are about to approve a very important Instrument that is laid before this House and I believe Mr Speaker, the Members of Parliament as you said just now, are well au-fait with what is happening presently in the Well of Parliament, and I am quite sure we have been waiting for this for quite a long time Mr Speaker; so we thank God that it is finally here for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before going further, we would like to thank the Institution that is in-charge of what is before us today - the NCRA, the Leadership and the entire Management of the NCRA for a job well done, for making sure that this agreement is before us today. Mr Speaker, we have been waiting for this, and the citizens have been wishing to have a National ID Card; today, it is before us for ratification in making sure that every citizen of this nation carries along his or her identification card to every area they go.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the good thing about this agreement is that, the ID Cards has three categories as the Minister mentioned; the ECOWAS, the National ID Cards and the non-citizens as well. Mr Speaker to be honest, it is important moreover, to travel within ECOWAS Countries without no hindrance as far as you can go having

the ID Cards that takes you to; Liberia, The Gambia, Nigeria; you name them Mr Speaker, which is important for all us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this agreement will help citizens to identify themselves because moreover Mr Speaker, there have been a lot of 419s, and people in this country are engaged in a lot of fraudulent activities within the country pretending to be Sierra Leoneans, but they are not. So Mr Speaker, this will help to ensure that we handle those criminals who have been notorious in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members today, I believe this agreement is not controversial at all. Mr Speaker as you said it is important that we pass this agreement as soon as possible to make sure that every citizen goes with his or her ID Cards within ECOWAS Countries, and Sierra Leone in particular. So Mr Speaker without much ado, I want to crave the indulgence of my colleagues, to make sure that this agreement is passed as soon as possible; thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara.

HON ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, within the last two years I have asked the Chairman for Internal Affairs; when is our people going to have their national ID cards? Today I am sure, he is bit relaxed because I am not going to ask him again any longer *[Laughter]*. And that is why I will support this agreement for specific reasons *[Undertone]*. First in the history of Sierra Leone because, this is one that affects the ordinary people in Sierra Leone; I know the risk being taken by our people when they go for passports and do not have them *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara [AKK], you do not understand the import of 'first in history'; this is first in history that you are supporting a Government Motion *[Laughter]*.

HON ABDUL K. KAMARA. When you have a Liberator as a Speaker, all generals bow and they salute the Speaker when he has made a statement; so my Liberator, it should not be a surprise. On a more serious note, we have all witnessed a scenario when we came to this Parliament, there was a case with our brother - the Honourable from Bo

Kekura Vandy; I could remember, he reported somebody using his name and certificate in my poor village in Robat, in Kambia and had he been an Opposition Member of Parliament I am sure, he would not have been here because; they were going to use that to get him out of this Parliament. It was a similar case with the Honourable Member seated right behind my back here; he was also accused and taken to Court, that he was an employee of Immigration's Department because the same name was at Immigration. I am sure if we had this National Identification Number, it would have addressed most of those issues. It was the same with the Honourable Momoh Kamara, who is today home because of the same count charge of somebody using a similar name like his as a teacher, whilst he was here in Parliament. So this is more the reason why I am speedily supporting this Agreement because as we speak here, I am Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, the Honourable on the right is also Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara and he is born on the 6th of March, I am born on the 7th of March; he is from Constituency 069, whilst I am from 059, so you see the similarities. So to address some of these similarities, the NIN is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is very, very much interesting but it is also good for security implications. We lived in a country where somebody can commit a crime in one area and move to the other and being considered an Imam or is being given preferential treatment as far as justice is concerned. But with this Bill, I am sure it will curtail justice-related issues and more so, when it comes to issues relating to the Sexual Offences Act where we see today the case of Kamaraimba, people denying the child is above 18 or below 18; so with this, it will also address such justice-related issues. I am a bit worried that we are having 75% 25% and the Minister is saying we are going to start with **Le75,000** payment. Considering our people in the rural areas, I am sure **Le75,000** seventy five thousand is a bit expensive; because these are ID cards that will be needed for even kids that are progressively going to the Junior Secondary Schools [JSS], they may need their ID cards to ascertain their age because, we need to have background checks of their academic records which will be attached to their NIN numbers. But **Le75,000** will be very, very much expensive and we have not been told

of the duration of those ID cards - Is it the two or five years ID card? What will be the duration of the ID cards to be used? We are also interested in such an information. It would also ease the risk of Immigration Officers in the sense that, if somebody has a national ID card, even the interview at the Immigration will be but flexible because, there is a primary source of verification before actually going for the passport. But the Immigration Officers now stand the risk of giving non-citizens the national passport because; there was no pre-verification method before applying for the passport. But now that we have a situation wherein the NIN number will be attached to your passport number and the risk of committing a crime will be reduced.

So when I said I support this agreement, it is based on the fundamental principles of security and of justice-related matters but I want to say that, we must consider the pricing; **Le75,000** is too much, and we pray it is being reduced to a point that an ordinary citizen in Krubola, Mansongbala can assess this national ID card before they get to JSS I. Thank you Mr Speaker.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed the document before the House this morning for ratification, is a non-controversial one; and one that I believe, every Sierra Leonean must be proud of. Of course, the issue of having a digitalised national identification card is very important. This is something that the past Government promised in 2015 during the registration, during the population and housing census that Sierra Leoneans were going to have a national identification number which of course, did not come to fruition. However, we believe that it is a good initiative as people say, governance is continuity and those areas that the previous Government could not achieve that are of immense value to Sierra Leoneans; and this Government is now coming in to ensure that today, we are passing a document of this nature that will guaranty every Sierra Leonean proper identification system, I believe it is a laudable venture.

With regards to the features of the ID card, the Minister in his presentation emphasized on the affordability saying, cheap-based; but **Le75,000** for every Sierra Leonean is not small money, at certain level you might look at it as being a cheap price but I believe,

Le75,000 is not cheap. So Mr Minister, see how you and your team can look into it, because it is very important; as we would want to ensure that every Sierra Leonean is identified.

Decentralisation, is another thing that is very good about this agreement; because, we have seen a system in this country wherein whatever you are in need of, you must come to Freetown and if we are crying today that Freetown is overpopulated, congested, no fresh air in the city, it is as a result because these services are not easily accessed in the provinces. Whatever service you need, you must come to Freetown. So having this system being decentralised across the Sixteen [16] Districts of course, I would like to hear from the Minister as to how we have seventy [17] registration districts for NCRA, because I believe we have sixteen [16] political Districts in the country. It is very important that people across the country, at their various districts headquarter towns; have access to these ID cards other than going through the constraints of coming to Freetown.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it also talked about the ECOWAS identification to ease movement within the ECOWAS sub-region; it is very important. Sierra Leone, as the Speaker said earlier, is far behind in terms of matching up to standards; although, it is better late than never so we appreciate the fact that it is coming, that will help a lot. It also talked about the other features of this ID card that has to do with asset, properties, and land registration; every now and then *[Interruption]*.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I am rising on a point of order Mr Speaker. I think *[Interruption]*...

THE SPEAKER: Chief Whip, leave that one out *[Undertone]*. Yes; Honourable Member, be guided.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, I am well guided in this debate; I believe from the registration process in 2015, slips were given without any ID cards bearing the national identification numbers *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do not get yourself worried about that; proceed.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker as I said earlier, we would also want to see other features on this identification card that will keep track of student's academic records; it is also important. If students are being enrolled into the Universities and Colleges, it is but important that their grades, assessments are attached to their NIN numbers. He talked about malpractices, falsification of documents; all of these are going to be addressed by these identification cards. With regards to the percentage, having 25% for the first ten years and 30% for the last five years, what comes next after that? These are all issues we would want the Ministry to look into. Because at the end of the day, the production of these ID cards does not end after fifteen years, it keeps going; we expect the Minister to give us the figures as nation, we would be getting from this contract as we move on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on a whole as colleagues have said, the contract itself is non-controversial and Sierra Leone as a nation has been waiting for such an innovation; though we are far behind, but we believe it is better late than never. We want to appreciate the Minister and his team for putting this contract together, and I want to implore Colleagues for us to speedily ratify this document, for the smooth running of our beloved nation. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin, Leader do you want to say anything?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Yes, it is just a short one Mr Speaker. I would want to know today's date, as my ears seems to be deceiving me; because, from the two speakers that I have just heard from, I can say today is my best day in Parliament. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: *[Laughter]* Yes Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Thank you very Much Mr Speaker. Thank you very much Chief Whip. I think we are approaching another life span in our history of this noble House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, do not tell me that you have not committed such an error; because English is not our L [1].

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to express gratitude to the meticulous Minister and his team for putting this document together and above all, by extension to His Excellency the President, for appointing them to the various offices for the job they are doing. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say that today is the happiest day for me because since the verification were done, I still have NCRA slip in my car; it is very important for those of us who have been in other parts of the World, who have travelled; identification is very important because in the event of difficult circumstances, the only way you can be identified is through your identity card. At the moment, the only way you could be identified since the expiration of our National ID Card that has a very limited feature is maybe, by your Driving Licence which is also very good. But today, we are going beyond that history that we are coming to have a reputable, a very decent and a very securitized Identity Card that you can travel with, and can stand the test of time. Mr Speaker,...

THE SPEAKER: Sorry Honourable Lamin, immediately after Honourable Lamin we are rounding up

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS LAMIN: And if you look at the job, my concern here Mr Minister is the confidentiality; you have collected quite a reasonable amount of data on citizens of this country. I have seen many people who are very boastful of sharing information which has nothing to do with other persons when they have access to information, I hope and trust that wherever that server is that contains the information collected of those people, will be well protected; that is my big concern Mr Minister. In your explanation, you said there are **5.9Mln** citizens of this nation that are registered, and it is a break-through that we have come to this. I hope and pray that pretty soon; I will kick this slip away and carry along my right Identification Card.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues are talking about **Le75,000**; when you have a child in the Pre-school, the basic amount that they are asking for as

registration for ID card in the Preschool is Le100,000 [One Hundred Thousand Leones] and above. So when you talk about **Le75,000** for Identity Card that will take you from here [Sierra Leone] to any West Africa country is 'value for money'; life itself is never a cheap something. Today, we are talking about ID card with pictures; it is not an ordinary ID card that you can go to any Printing Press for them to print for you, but one with pictures unique one; that you can carry along, and that can stand the test of time. And all research has been done around it and I believe that those people, who have done so, based it on 'value for money'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to toe the line of my colleague who have asked for the duration of the ID card. The previous one like Driving Licence is Five years and then we do hope that considerable time would be given to it so that the cost will be appreciated by those who have raised that concern and we are talking about **\$20.5Mln** investment. This is not cheap, you cannot invest **\$20.5Mln** into something that you would expect to give pittance say **Le5** or **Le10**; you would want at least, an appreciable outcome though not one that will make you rich but at the same time, would make you recover the money that you have expended or invested into that particular project. So on that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe that it is a job well done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, 15 years contract; I like it and it is not the one like the Toll Gate - 30 years and can be extended, okay; we were going to extend it and so on [*Laughing*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Lamin, leave that. Honourable Lamin leave that.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS LAMIN: Thank you Mr Speaker. My leader, please hold your peace, I will not go to that area.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please let me address this point. Hold on, Honourable Lamin hold on. As far as I sit here, Members of the Opposition and Members of the Government Bench, I really do not want to hear politicking; the point is that very soon, we would be going to the polls where the people will speak

[Undertone]. Of course, I already know how they are going to speak but in any case, let us leave that for the polls. Let us proceed, Honourable Lamin.

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN WILLIAMS: If that raise any eyebrows, I want you to take your peace on it; I will not go to that area again. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a merit for the score card; we promised this nation, that we will deliver service to this nation and across the aisle of this House, we are concertedly doing this and we appreciate that. On that note Mr Minister and your team and by extension, to the Leadership of this nation; that we want to say thank you, and I encourage all my colleagues for us to speedily approve this agreement for work to commence as soon as possible. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: Mr Speaker, please.

THE SPEAKER: Yes,

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: I was craving your indulgence to get us two minutes to contribute to something that really excites me about this agreement. I am not going to debate; I just need your attention for just two minutes.

THE SPEAKER: hold on, well of course, I have not heard the voice of a lady since this morning; so because of that, I will bend backwards. Let me hear you.

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Laughing]*, thank you. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, mine is not a debate, it is just something that I have picked up in this agreement that really excites me which I want to highlight to the nation. And that is the fact that we have an interlink relationship with all security and identification processes together. I will give you an example why I am so excited, I just came across it and I thought I cannot keep quite Mr Speaker.

Few months ago, my car was hit by an unprofessional driver, very reckless driver. And apparently I called the police; they took details of this driver. He gave me his contact numbers, we took the car`s registration number and everything. Mr Speaker, it will

amaze you that this driver is still nowhere to be seen. His details were all faked; we have no way of tracing him. I had to fix my vehicle because I was hit from the back. I have contacted the police several times but they cannot trace the driver. Now with this agreement Mr Speaker, what I have picked up is that by the moment you buy your vehicle, you are easily traced. Your details are on the system. So, whether the police are able to trace you or not, it will be easy to trace you by entering your information's, because what will then happen if you don't fix my car I will get your identification number or your registration number which is what happened in other countries like UK, the moment they enter your registration number, it gives you the name, date of birth, address, insurance and everything about a particular individual. We are now hoping that, this is what is going to happen; Mr Speaker, with every security information linked together from what I have picked up, it will make life easy for some of us that are careful drivers in this country and so many other Sectors. This is just one example of tracing people in this country. When you travel sometimes, for some of us Honourable Members, whom I believed a lot have travelled out of this country; the UK for now, is using identification cards. The moment you use the card, your fingerprint, your address, date of birth, everything comes up; and if this is the kind of structure we are looking for in Sierra Leone, then it worth it. I looked at that agreement just now and I picked up that one line, so I just could not control myself. How improved, how far-forward and proud would Sierra Leoneans be? So I mean, like every other speaker...

THE SPEAKER: I agree.

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: it is not just about the agreement by the Minister and the NCRA, but it is the fact that we are moving on, and we have improved so much and we must recognised the fact that things have changed, and we are now competing with other African countries. So Mr Speaker, I just wanted to bring that to your notice; that I am over-excited, and I just want to thank the Minister and everybody involved in putting this document together and thank you for making us stay in Sierra Leone; thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I totally agree with you Honourable Member, I totally agree. Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

HON. CHERNOR R. M. BAH: Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I think you were a little bit irritated with the comment of Honourable Lamin; please go easy, go easy on him *[Laughing]*.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: No, no, no, you know I am way above that; they were fortunate this morning, even the last speaker is also fortunate but she is my sister. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one thing I want to point out is that; the entire exercise is a process. It started in 2015/2016, and the figures the Minister mentioned were not accumulated overnight; the Minister knows what I am talking about, and so also the head of NCRA. And Mr Speaker, most of what is in this agreement was taken from the Act; when was that act passed? It was passed during the last Parliament, the Minister knows that. So it is good to make such a statement; but it is also good to know the root of all of these things *[Applause]*. But some of them were not here Mr Speaker, so as I said, I will not because Honourable Joseph Williams Lamin is a good friend of mine; I just want to remind him, he is a humanitarian. The Toll Road we are talking about, the SLPP cannot venture to cancel that agreement; even though they promised to do so. But that is not the point; this is for my colleague from Koribondo, Njiama Bongor and Wonde.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, the rate of accidents along the Jui-waterloo axis has reduced drastically because accidents were occurring on that road on a daily basis; we used to lose lives every week, accidents are still occurring there but very minimal. The Minister in charge of Internal Affairs I am sure knows that; it is good to save money but lives-saving, cannot be compared to saving money as well. So please my brother from Njiama Wonde and Koribondo and everywhere; in future also, think about the moral side of things because, we are political Leaders.

One of my colleagues also said that, we are far behind but I think he is from the Kono axis; Mr Speaker, we are not far behind. The Minister would also tell you that apart

from Senegal, Ghana, Niger and Nigeria; all other countries are yet to implement the ECOWAS ID. We have made progress, so we want to say kudos to the team; this is a good lead. When you travel, you meet with our colleagues from Ghana or Senegal; they just use their ECOWAS ID to travel meaning, they have saved their passports. Mr Minister, the only thing I want to plead with you for is; because if you go to page 67. *[Mr Speaker, the Minister of Transport is threatening me]*. Page 67... Mr Leader, I want you to look at page 67; definitely, the agreement is necessary, it is good and we should ratify it; but we need to go back and look at these figures. My colleagues mentioned **Le75,000**, that amount could not be questioned because, it is for five years. But paying for the ECOWAS ID at **\$15,000** a year; and if you multiply that by 5, it will give you **\$75,000** and the passport is costing us **\$100** for Five Years. So Mr Minister, you need to go back to the drawing board; it is either you revisit the figure, or you increase the number of years but we should go back to it *[Applause]*. In as much as we are not going to be an obstacle to the implementation of this document but definitely Mr Minister, we would not want to be party to it. If the ID Card is costing you **\$75,000** for five years, and your passport is costing you **\$100** for five years, people would prefer going in for their passports again but we need this ID Card because it is Biometric, and it will have a lot of value not just to us as citizens, but to make sure that we properly integrate within West Africa. So Mr Minister, I hope you have taken a look at it for you to go back and meet with those who are parties to this agreement *[Applause]*. They will see reasons and I am sure they will definitely see reasons. Mr Speaker, I am sure we are together in this because, those that will be paying the price might not be the ordinary citizens who will be paying eighty-five Thousand but people like us, and those in the middle class, because we do travel and for those that will be going across to Liberia, to Guinea, to Cote d'voire *[Undertone]*. Let him approach the Minister maybe, he would have something to say to him; but if you go it says: National ID Card Sierra Leone Citizens only, **\$7**. But when you go the next it says: Sierra Leone ECOWAS ID Cards for Sierra Leoneans wishing to travel within ECOWAS Member Countries: the cost is **\$15** and the duration is one year *[Undertone]*. So it is something... if it is an error also, he would tell us that. Is it an error? So Mr Minister, you have now got the answer

right? We have to agree on the duration now, or Parliament will take a position on the duration because, if we are paying **\$75,000** for five years for an ID card when the cost of production will not be the same as producing a passport *[Undertone]*; we need to take a position as a Parliament. The Expert is advising the Minister now, and I am sure the Minister would not want to take the Sierra Leoneans through this himself, as a politician. The agreement is definitely necessary, so how much are they paying in Ghana for five years, so Mr Minister, this is basically my position and I am sure, so it is for many of us; so we want that to be recorded *[Applause]*. Mr Leader, are we together sir? We want it to be recorded that it is our position so that at the end of day, *[Undertone]*; Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much and as I said, we will support the agreement and we expect that this House will endorse it. Thank you very much.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all colleagues for contributing to this debate. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as had been said by my colleagues this agreement is not controversial so we are not going to spend much time on it. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members as Sierra Leoneans, we have urged for the longest period of time for our national ID cards. Mr Speaker, I can vividly remember since 2015, this country have been crying for national identity cards, today Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have got a comprehensive Agreement being presented to us. I want to thank the Minister and team; this is what is expected from all Ministries. When you brought any agreement here to us, ensure that you come along with a comprehensive one together with its drawings; and that is what exactly you and your team have done. We can vividly see the ID cards that will be presented to us after this agreement becomes a law. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of course, we have listened to the Leader of the Opposition, and it is very correct that we cannot be paying **\$75,000** for ID card for five years and **\$15,000** per year for ECOWAS ID card, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, if you are buying **\$15,000** per year for ECOWAS ID card, and you are also paying **\$100** for the ECOWAS passport with which, you can travel with all over the world, why not prefer the ECOWAS passport instead of the ID card. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the

Ministry should take that into consideration to see how best we can amend the duration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for citizen ID card, I heard my Honourable from Kambia saying, **\$75,000** is too much. Mr Speaker, Honourable members, the agreement is **\$78,000; \$7**. When you go to other countries, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members for instance, when you go to Ghana, the cost of the national ID card in Ghana is **\$45**, which is **250Cedes** and for non-citizens, it is **\$120,000** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members; when you go to Liberia Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is **\$12,000**. So the Minister and team are very considerate with us, to give us an ID card that will be lasting us for five years, for **Le75,000**. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this agreement when once it becomes a law, it will definitely have plenty security features. Mr Speaker, we now have a situation wherein every Printing Press for instance, is doing ID cards for people; every Printing Press, and when you go to any Internet Café, you will see people doing ID cards. Today, we are going to have a unique securitized ID card that one can use for various purposes; for Bank transactions, for license purposes, for your NASSIT, for registration of cars, etcetera.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, when once we have unique numbers, it is like that of our Social Security Number. This same number will be used for your car registration, this same number will be used for NASSIT purposes, and this same number will be used for business purposes. So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is a unique situation and we are marching up with time; and as have been told by the leader of the opposition, we are working towards meeting modern trend. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members I believe, and have been said, it is not controversial so it should be accepted. I want to applaud and appreciate all Members of Parliament who have contributed and also those who have not, but agreed with us that the Agreement is good. I want to advice the Minister, as you have promised us that decentralization will take place, we do not want to have a situation in which our people would have cause to be moving from our Constituencies to come to Freetown. Assuring us of decentralization, we want a situation in which the people from Krubola will go to Mongor, and are able to get their

ID cards; we want a situation wherein people in Baoma, will travel to Bo and get their ID cards. We would not want a situation wherein you will start telling us, we are still working on the decentralization process. I think the decentralization process should be done together with this agreement *[Applause]*. When once this agreement is passed into law, when once the ID cards are launched and processed, we should be able to acquire it in our various District Headquarter Towns. Thankfully, NCRA is having offices in almost all District Headquarter Towns *[Undertones]*. Okay, I have just been advised that we have NCRA offices in all District Headquarter towns, so we expect that you put the infrastructure in place in those areas, so our people will not be struggling by running to Freetown; because if you say that the ID card is **Le75,000** in Freetown, and you have our people moving from Kailahun to Freetown, the person will be paying not less than **Le500,000** or more taking into consideration transportation fare.

So Minister, I will advise that you work on the decentralization process so when once it is being launched in Freetown, they can be able to acquire it in Bo, in Kenema, in Makeni, in Kabala at the same point and at the same price . We do not want a situation in which you will say in Bo, it is **Le80,000** or **Le90,000**; and in Kabala it is going to be something else, we should have a uniform prices. So I will encourage you Mr Minister, as well as the Chairman and Members of the Committee on Internal Affairs who will be doing the follow-ups on these agreements; to ensure that all what is contained in the agreement will be adhered to for people to benefit. Thank you very much Mr Speaker, thank you very much Mr Minister, thank you Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: Yes Mr Minister, let me hear you.

MR. DAVID PANDA NOAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank this Honourable House for your support, for the debate, for your concerns; we welcome them, and we say thanks very much for your support. Regarding the cost of **Le75,000** in the Sub-region we are the cheapest, and we are saying let us... *[Undertones]*, yes, we are the cheapest in the Sub-region. Honourable Members, with regards to the number of districts it is seventeen because of Bonthe Island and main land. The duration of the card is five years, and I want to assure Honourable Members in the

House that the data will be protected, and we will soon be coming with the Data Protection Bill to the House; to ensure that data all over our nation is protected *[undertone]*. It will be here soon, Honourable Members.

With regards to the ECOWAS ID at **\$15**, we would look into that in order to ensure that our nation enjoys some amount of leverage. I want to assure the Honourable House that the decentralization would be a **MUST**, and it is something I am very keen on it. I always and I will support the lightening of the load on our people and so certainly, we would ensure that decentralization takes place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having clarified these things, be it resolve that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following agreement which was laid on the table of the House on Thursday 17th March 2022:

Agreement for the production and issuance of securitize multi-purpose identity cards national non-national and ECOWAS. ID verification system and public key infrastructure (PKI), National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) and Constrata System S\L Limited.
Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the question is; yes Honourable.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, there was a concern about the ECOWAS ID; I wonder if we cannot amend it here now as a House because, when once it is ratified...

THE SPEAKER: No, no; you cannot amend an agreement. You can't.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: well, if he can assure us that it would be looked into, it will be good.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the question is:

HON DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, before you put the question I want to make a plea.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I really do not know what you are doing; you are not supposed to be doing this. I am putting the question really, but let me hear you being a Leader. What do you intend saying?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, in making this plea; let me first of all thank the DG from National Civil Registration Authority [NCRA]. I could remember when we had a meeting at the Bintumani or the Miata Conference; he sent his team to verify us. I also want to make this appeal that when the distribution of these ID cards commences, they should send a team to Parliament for Members to have that privilege. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Yes sure, certainly; no, they always do that. Of course, the DG for NCRA knows as well as the Minister, that anything concerning registration or what have you, they should come to Parliament; we know we are all citizens, but we are more equal. We are all equal but we are more equal than others *[Laughter]*. So please take note, and send your team please.

[Questions Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Government motion by the Minister of Internal Affairs has been ratified].

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, thank you very much; you may leave.

TABLE CLERK: Government Motion B: The Minister of Transport and Aviation.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Chairman; please before you proceed. Mr Chairman, why do you want to keep the Minister of Internal Affairs here?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: It is classified, Mr Speaker; that is very personal.

THE SPEAKER: *[Laughter]* Okay, proceed.

MR. REX BONAPHA [Deputy Minister]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved: that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Thursday 17th March 2022: Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Ashmite Kingdom of Jordan and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] between the Aeronautical authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Sierra Leone, Bilateral

Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Objects and Reasons of the Agreement: The Chicago Convention of 1944 established the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), responsible for fostering the planning and development of international air transport, and International Civil Aviation. Over the years, ICAO developed a series of traffic rights known as freedoms of the Air. These freedoms continue to form the basis of rights, exchanged in the air services negotiations today. National Governments must continually negotiate new Treaties to allow International Aviation to grow and to expand their Carriers, access to new and emerging markets as well. The Bilateral system has allowed international aviation to grow into a vibrant industry. Today it is a sure part to liberalizing the Air Transport Sector. In the circumstance, it should be noted that these agreements are at no financial cost to government and people of Sierra Leone whatsoever, but rather meant to facilitate air transport and its intended economic benefits. *Vis-à-vis*: boost productivity, facilitate world trade, promote tourism, improves the efficiency of supply chains, enables investment and labour supplies both into and out of the country, and referred to as; spill-over-effects. Thus, bilateral air services agreement or arrangement contain provisions on: traffic rights, the route airlines can fly including cities that can be served within, between and beyond the bilateral partners as the case may be.

Capacity: the number of flights that can be operated or passengers that can be carried between the bilateral partners.

Designation, Ownership and Control: the number of airlines the bilateral partners can nominate to operate services and ownership criteria Airlines must meet to designate under the bilateral agreements.

Operational Flexibility: each designated Airline may operate flight in either or both directions.

Cooperative Arrangements: that is; in operating the authorized services on the agreed route, a designated Airline of one-state-party may enter into cooperative marketing arrangement such as blockade, space, code, sharing etcetera.

Competition Rule: State Parties, shall ensure fair opportunities on non-discriminatory basis; as such over the years, the state of Sierra Leone has initiated the following Bilateral Air Services Agreements, which I now submit for your due consideration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved: that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Thursday 17th March 2022: Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Ashmite Kingdom of Jordan and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and the Government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] between the Aeronautical authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Sierra Leone, Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Question Proposed

Honourable Members, this Agreement is straight-forward; and in the circumstances, I am going to allow one speaker from either side of the aisle except, if the Leaders or our elders - the Paramount Chiefs, wants to say something; other than that, I am going to take just one from either side. Yes who is the Chairman? Oh leader, I saw you getting up; do you want to say something [*Undertone*]? The Chairman of the Committee, but incidentally, he is not here; so if you want to say anything, let me hear from you.

HON. SAA E. LAMINA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not sure this is a controversial Agreement at all and because it is not controversial, this House needs not to waste much time on such Agreement [*Applause*]. I admired the radical move of the Minister; I vividly remembered in 2018, he did promise us and we were at a business

community meeting, when he promised UN that he will bring reforms in the Air Transport Sector; I am talking about the Minister, Mr Kabineh Kallon. Seeing this manifesto through MOUs and bilateral agreements, I feel satisfied and vividly remind me of 2018 in New York City.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having bilateral agreement with Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria, is very important. Had it not been for the Covid-19 every year, our Muslim brothers do perform the Hajj, which is one of the Pillars of Islam; and having this bilateral agreement now, it will make it easier for them. I invite the Minister of Trade, to copy such a radical move in the Air Transport Sector especially over political goods such as; fuel, rice, cement, iron rod, and flour - these are very important political goods. If the Minister of Trade can imitate from the radical change from that of the Minister of Transport and Aviation is bringing in now, it will be good for this nation; I imagine the employment facility it will create for Sierra Leoneans, and also the Liberalised Transport Corporation and Air Space each country will have upon the ratification of this Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I lure my colleagues to speedily ratify such an important document for our Air Transport Sector. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Lamin; I saw you getting up. Ok, Honourable at the back. Yes. I am not seeing any Leader at the front row, so Honourable Aaron I think you will assume the Leadership of the Opposition not so? After him, we are rounding up. Then the Chief Whip can round-up in the absence of the Acting Leader. Yes, you can proceed.

HON. ALEX M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I may want to add my voice to this debate; and I am not denying the fact that, it is not controversial. But we have seen and ratified series of Air Services agreements in this Well, so I would like to dilate on the Bilateral Agreement particularly, in the context of Aviation. The Minister will agree with me that, Air Services Agreements as he rightly put it; is based under the Chicago Convention and its Associated Multilateral Treaties. It is also on the basis of BASAs - in the sense of Bilateral Air Services Agreements; that is the acronym. These

are Treaties that are signed between countries to promote International Commercial Air Services in the context of promoting or supporting the movement of persons, trade, and cargo. I may want to express some concerns although; I have not thoroughly looked at it. Those concerns that I would want to share with the Ministers, will flow within the stream of the air-worthiness. The air-worthiness concerns in the context of *[interruption]*.

Suspension of S.O.5 [2]

HON. ALEX M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was expressing some concerns in the context of Airworthiness. Airworthiness within the stream of being competent so that those air services may have on both the contracting parties, a valid certificate and licences; the Minister will understand what I am trying to say. I may also want to express a concern on the safety and security within the confinement of international law. I do not know whether within the agreement if my memories could be sharpened that, wherein they create room for unlimited air space. Meaning, I have this fear that what if in an area wherein any of the air services would just fly into our petroleum zone maybe, with those chemical weapons? You would not know the danger it will cause in such area, and that is the reason why I am stressing on the security and safety aspects of it; for them to carry along the valid licences within the confinement of international law. Moreover, settlement of disputes is another concern I want to express here; settlement of disputes is one you cannot rule out as anything can crop up between the contracting parties. I may want to urge the Minister, for him to capture those settlements of disputes to be within the confinement of mode and diplomacy; peaceful settlement of disputes. With those few comments, since I have already asserted that, those Air Services Agreements that we have ratified here including this one also, are non-controversial; I urge my colleagues to have a swift passage for this particular Agreement that is before us today. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Honourable. Yes Leader, let us round up. Leader of the Opposition.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you Mr Speaker. All of the Agreements that have been brought before this House to be ratified are non-controversial, and we normally say: 'the more the merrier'; because the more air services agreement we have, the better it is for this country. Dealing with countries like Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, Jordan etcetera, that have reputable International flights, to help develop our Aeronautic Industry and of course, the relationship with those countries will only improve our standing in the International Aviation world. Definitely, we have no problem in terms of approving or ratifying these agreements; we only hope that after ratifying these agreements, they will start operating here. We would want to start seeing airlines from Mozambique, Saudi Arabia, to ply our route so that, we will have more access though taking into consideration the fact that, our air tickets are now the most expensive in the Sub-region. I hope and I pray that having this multiple airlines coming into the country, will change the narrative as far as the cost of airline tickets are concerned. It is obvious that buying a ticket in Sierra Leone may be different as compared to the cost of tickets in Conakry, Guinea; the difference may be huge. I hope that the Minister will take into consideration when negotiating with regards these international agreements, the cost of the tickets as well as the earning power of the average Sierra Leonean. Let us make it affordable for people in Sierra Leone no matter what, so that people will not see flying out of the country as a luxury; but as necessity so we have no problem ratifying these agreements. We only hope that, all of them would work in the favour and interest of Sierra Leone in order to improve our Aviation Industry the more; I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, the Leader.

HON DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if an agreement is coming from the Government bench and the Opposition is showering praises on such Agreements, I am not sure if Members from the Government side would have anything to say. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like my colleague from the other side had earlier on said, I would not want our shelves to be filled with papers that would absorb dust but rather, for the Minister and the Ministry to do follow-

ups on all of those agreements, and making sure that we have those flights coming in to Sierra Leone. The reason why our flight tickets are so expensive like my colleague on the other side was saying is for instance; if I am travelling to England, or let me say Kenya for example, I have to go through Ghana which is an additional cost - going to Ghana and then Kenya. But if we have a direct flight to go to Kenya, I will just pay from Sierra Leone to Kenya or even to Saudi Arabia, rather than going through Guinea, Ghana, and The Gambia etcetera; I will just pay for a one-way flight. So please Mr Minister, this House is pleading with you and your Ministry, to make sure that our shelves are not filled with empty papers; but let them be followed up with actions. I want to say a big thank you to that Ministry for making us proud because, if the Opposition are not opposing those agreements but rather showering praises; it means, you guys in that Ministry are doing well. We would want a follow-up between now unto the elections, for those travelling tickets to be cheap and let us have flights going all over this world; which I believe would keep our colleagues where they are permanently. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, let me hear from you based on their comments.

MR REX BONAPHA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are all almost in agreement, that these agreements are non-controversial and therefore, it does not require lengthy discussions. However, let me take note of the few concerns raised by few Parliamentarians especially the one that has to do with Bilateral Air Services Agreement; that would not want your shelves to be filled with empty papers. I want to assure you that this bilateral agreement is a precursor to the coming of new airlines into our air space. That is the more reason we are in a hurry to ensure that we bring it to you for ratification and once that is done, I can assure that very soon we will start seeing different airlines coming to Sierra Leone. One Honourable Member raised a concern that has to do with people just coming into our air space and perhaps even landing at our airport; I can assure you, that is been handled very well by our technical team in the Civil Aviation *[Interruption]*.

HON DICKSON M. ROGERS: Sorry Mr Speaker. When addressing Honourable Members, you do not refer to them as 'somebody'.

MR REX BONAPHA: My apologies.

HON DICKSON ROGERS: Thank you very much.

MR REX BONAPHA: An Honourable Member, made a comment regarding *[interruption]*...

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, do not forget that you are in the House of Parliament; we can keep you here.

MR REX BONAPHA: That is not a dispute Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: *[Laughing]* Proceed.

MR REX BONAPHA: So now that these agreements are non-controversial, I still want to plead with this House that those concerns you have raised would be taken into consideration and would spear no effort in addressing all of them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved: that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Thursday 17th March 2022: Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Ashmite Kingdom of Jordan and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone. Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and the Government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Memorandum of Understanding [MOU] between the Aeronautical authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Sierra Leone, Bilateral Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you very.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed to]

[Government's Motion by the Minister of Transport and Aviation has been ratified].

ADJOURNMENT

[Mr Speaker adjourned to Thursday, 24th March, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.]

[The House rose at 12:15p.m.]