

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

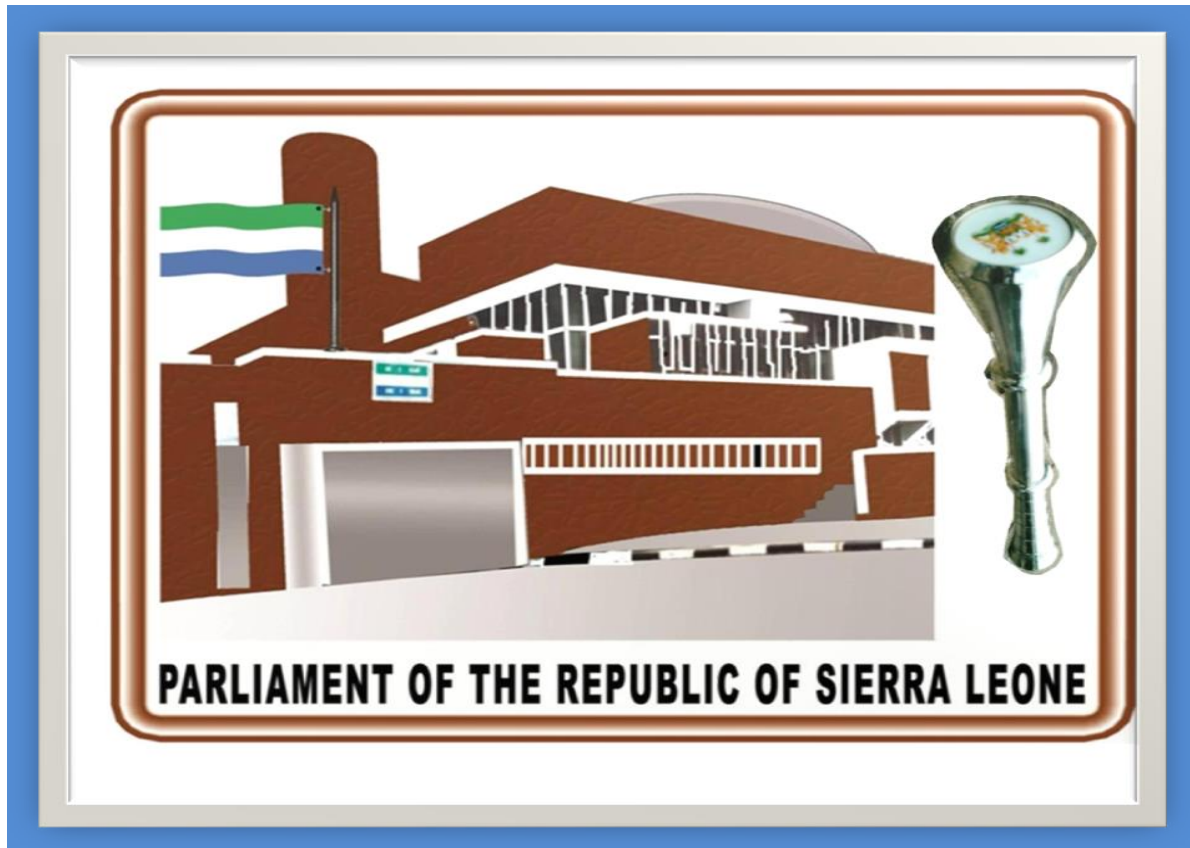
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2023

SESSION – 2023/2024



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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 23rd November, 2023.

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THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[THIRD ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 23rd November, 2023.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Edward Lebbie, Read the Prayers]

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

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

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR WEDNESDAY 22ND NOVEMBER, 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, can we now start with the Votes and Proceedings for Parliamentary sitting held on Wednesday, 22nd November, 2023? As usual, we shall skip pages 1 through 4. Page 5?, Page 6?, Page 7? Any amendment? Can someone move?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. NENEH LEBBIE: I so Second

[Question Proposed, Put & Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Wednesday 22nd November 2023 has been adopted as amended]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER:

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, again I want to take the opportunity to thank all of you for being very dutiful to your calling as Members of Parliament, but more especially to those of you who are seated right now in this Well, who have again made sure that we commence our proceedings on time. I really can't thank you enough. I hope it is not a fluke, but this is going to continue as a pattern of behaviour. This is how mind-sets are developed; consistency in human activity and action. Just like bad habits, good habits are also revived through constant consistent practice. Let us shred the bad habits away and substitute in their place good habits, and time keeping is the best good habit known to man and women; of course when I say man, it encompasses women as well.

When I look to my left I see a mixture of the old and the new; when I look to my right I see more of the old and less of the new. So the compliment really will go first and foremost to the new Members; the old ones have been enjoying the compliment for a

very long time [*Undertone*] I know, I would continue to give you the necessary reinforcement, but for the new ones, I commend them because they have started on a good footing by demonstrating unquestionably a very profound sense of responsibility. I am very impressed; I am very, very impressed.

That is the way to go; show commitment by action not just by word of mouth, afterwards we can all say things that we do not mean. But in this particular case we are matching our words with action which is highly commended. I am sure some of you, like me, went to institutions and there we imbibed punctuality. The university I attended in Cambridge, 9 O'clock when lectures begin, the Lecturer goes there whether there is one person there or not, he starts lecturing. You are not penalized for coming late, when the one hour or two hours is done, he leaves. So if you want to enjoy the lecture and learn from your Lecturer, you would make sure you arrive before him. So, some of you have come from overseas I know, and you know what it means to be punctual, you know the consequences when you fail to meet your obligation of punctuality; your pocket feels it because your employer will not pay you for work that you have not done.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, can I be heard sir....just one minutes.

THE SPEAKER: I know you are very Punctilious, please hold on a minute. I want to find out about the MDAs, what is the position? Yes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker we are still calling on the MDAs to be here to listen to the voices of the representatives of the people, we will be doing a roll call before lunch and after lunch; the Table Clerks are taking records of the MDAs that are represented. We will continue to talk to the MDAs; if you are not here, at the end of the day we will ask the various Committees that will be looking at your budget to critically look at your budget and recommend to this House otherwise. So we are encouraging MDAs to be represented because we will do a roll call before and after lunch. So Mr Speaker that is what I would say so far for the MDAs.

Mr Speaker, I want to move that we amend the Order Paper; the **Bill** which is captured in the Order Paper as **Third Reading** to be recorded as **Second Reading** instead. I so move, Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder to that amendment?

HON. ABDULS. MARRAY CONTEH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed Put & Agreed To]

[Motion moved by the Acting Leader of Government Business has been carried.]

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, in addition to your words of recommendation, and in order to make things even much better, I am humbly suggesting that the Thumb Print Machine be multiplied if possible; maybe one this side and then one that side. It will serve as a reminder for all MPs entering this Well to do their thumb print. I observed few days ago that you were here at three minutes to ten and some MPs entered two minutes to ten, and because you were already seated, even though it was not yet time, they could not have the opportunity to go right round to do the thumb print, and sometimes they even forget to do so. So in order to make things better, we can have another Thumb Print Machine at that main entrance so that no sooner you enter you would see the machine and it will serve as a reminder for you to thumb print.

Then secondly, I have been instructed by my Leader to make this request for us to adjust the time for adjournment so that more people will contribute, especially the new MPs. It is a humble request Sir; we want more MPs, especially the new ones to contribute to this Budget debate. The new MPs on both sides want to be heard and seen by their constituents and other people in their districts. Some people have studied so much that they intend to deliver to turn this country around, and that was proven yesterday.

THE SPEAKER: *[Laughter]* you made the whole thing sounds like an examination.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Some people on our side spent sleepless night *[Laughter]* yes, just to give due diligence to this budget; one of the most important documents. So we are requesting that we adjust our time for adjournment in order to give room to more Members to participate, it is a humble request, Sir.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I stand on **S.O 5**.

THE SPEAKER: Yes

HON BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, we have always been magnanimous enough that even the time for lunch which is 12:00pm can sometimes be extended to 1:00pm or after just to encourage our MPs to debate.

THE SPEAKER: That is true.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, if you read **S.O 5**, the period for the end of Parliamentary Sittings should be 3:00pm, but the Speaker has been very magnanimous and we have always suspended **S.O 5[2]** for the Business of the House to continue. So we should just appeal that we have more time. The session should actually end at 3:00pm but we have always suspended **S.O 5[2]**. But again, we cannot be here beyond certain time; we are Members of Parliament and we are not paid for over time. So, if we manage to run the Parliament Sittings to 4:00 pm or 5:00pm, then we are fine. We are always here after 5:00 or 6:00pm; do you want us to be here until night? Is that what you are recommending? **S.O 5[2]** states that we should leave here at 3:00pm but we have been extending the time to 6:00pm at times just to allow all Members to contribute. We do not need to be here till mid night, and don't forget, this is the Budget, and we are meeting every day. So it is good that after 6pm you go and you come back in the morning and be expected to start at 10:00am.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member was not in any way requesting that we stay here till night. What he was appealing for is that we give more MPs the opportunity to hear out their voices, especially on a critical debate like this.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have had a lot of experiences on this side, wherein MPs were deprived of participating in debate in this Well. Most MPs could not

make it back to this House because their voices were never heard on critical debates. So Mr Speaker, I want you to use your good office and reduce the time for the contribution of individual Members of Parliament so that we could have more Members to participate. MPs should be happy to talk in Parliament; you should not be against it.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you know what I find interesting? Is that the Honourable Member from Koinadugu for whom I have a greatest respect, very skillfully avoided one issue in his representation, and that is, to admonish his own Members to keep to the time limit of 10minutes and to also extend that admonition to the other side- that is where the problem is. If they all keep to the 10 minutes then we would be able to accommodate many more Members.

HON. DAINEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, you know I agreed with you in the first place that 10minutes is enough and it will give opportunity to more Members. But Mr Speaker, the unnecessary interruption for which you have warned and warned but it has not been adhered to. So if you can take care of that unnecessary interruption, maybe it would be better today. The unnecessary interruption is the problem in Keeping to the 10 minutes.

THE SPEAKER: I know the Members who have this propensity to interrupt, I know them on either side of the Aisle, I know them, I don't want to name them but I know them.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, with all due respect to my Leader, there has never been any unnecessary interruptions.

THE SPEAKER: There they go, there they go, and there they go! I don't want to name them but they are naming themselves. Thank you; let us get on with the day's business.

IV BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2024: SECOND READING-

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE *[Sheku Fantamadi Bangura]*

[THIRD ALLOTTED DAY]

[Debate continued]

THE SPEAKER: Today is a very special day; I called it a day for the ladies. From what I am observing, let me start with Honourable Rosemary Kanu *[Applause]* you may have the Floor, 10 minutes.

HON. RUGIATU R. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Finance for putting together this budget for the Fiscal year of 2024.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to lend my voice to an issue that is now the topic of every Sierra Leonean; the issue of re-imposing **5%** tax on our staple food.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our country is in an economic down trend, so in escalating the **5%** interest on rice will only compound the rate of poverty of this nation. Mr Speaker Honourable Members, our people are already wallowing in poverty, so re-imposing this tax will only make things worse for our people, and may even lead to untimely death of some people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take a leaf from the WFP Sierra Leone Country Office Food Security Monitoring System Report of February, 2023. According to the Report, **'78% of Sierra Leone's Population is food insecure'**. Mr Speaker, this simply means that many Sierra Leoneans cannot afford basic meals per day.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the re-imposition of this tax will only create additional problem for our people. How can a poverty striking family at Mabayla be able to afford a bag of rice? How can an impoverished family at Portee be able to have a bag of rice to eat? How can a hungry and poor family in Allen Town be able to have a basic meal per day? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to lend a leaf form an inspirational writer, Collin Coolidge, he says; *'collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is a legalized robbery'*.

And so Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, more taxes on our staple food [Rice], on Cement and Iron Rod is legalized robbery.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the burden of this tax is upon the poor. These taxes are unjust and inequitable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am lending a voice because I want His Excellency to hear the cry of our people and not to append his signature on that Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would now move on to Education. Mr Speaker, according to the 2024 Budget, the Government will continue to support Free Quality Education by providing tuition fee and learning materials.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you cannot support quality education without having access to Water, Hygiene and Sanitation. The 2022 School Census Annual Report of April 2023 states that *'the school access to water has depreciated, it has dropped from **73%** in 2021 to **57%** in 2022'* and the report further states that this is "**worrisome**"

Mr Speaker, we all know the importance of water and sanitation in schools, especially at the pre-primary and primary level. And that is the area that the report says we have the least support even though it is very critical to the development of a healthy child. Mr Speaker, the lack of sanitation, water and hygiene in schools posed a significant threat to the health of the children, which in turn has an overall effect on the development and learning of the children at that level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to maintain the dignity of our children at that level; Pre-primary and Primary education. I was expecting that the 2024 Budget could have captured water and sanitation in schools because they are critical for the retention of children in schools. How can you sustain retention in schools without water and sanitation? How can you sustain the dignity of our children when they urinate and defecate at that level in schools without water and sanitation?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, when I look at the Budget allocated to Pre and Primary Education, I said this is ridiculous. The Pre-Primary School is very critical for children to develop their foundational scale of literacy, reading, writing and numeracy.

So treating such level with levity is like saying, we are not serious to support quality education in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even though WASH in schools is not captured in this project, I am kindly asking for it to be captured in the budget because we want to have healthy children. When the foundation is weak, the super structure becomes weak and so, I am requesting that more resources be allocated to the Pre-Primary and Primary education because that is the foundation. If we are serious about taking education to another level, then we must be able to build on the foundation of our children.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the construction of schools is only limited to Secondary Schools. We still have a lot of schools that are yet to be constructed, and we still have a lot of schools that are dilapidated.

Mr Speaker, as I stand here, I can still hear the echoes of some children in a dilapidated class room singing, **S.O** [2], '*Mr Conteh, why ooh, why ooh we dae suffer*'. Our children in the Pre-primary and Primary Schools are suffering; they are suffering under the dilapidated buildings.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before this time the Government promised to build schools at least in every Constituency [*Undertone*] it has not been done in my own Constituency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we still need permanent structures at the Pre-Primary and Primary levels. We only have 199 Principals in this nation, and most of them are owned by private schools. Why can't we maintain the Government Principals?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at Gender. When I looked at the budget for Gender, I started wondering and asking question; are we really serious to implement Gender activities in this nation?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have passed the GEWE Bill here in Parliament but we need a national popularization of the GEWE Act. Mr Speaker, we still have a lot of women who do not even know what the Act contains or what it is about. That is why we need a national popularization of that Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was discussing the other day with one of my women about the importance of the Act and you know what she told me? S.O [2], Oh, na da Bill wae say if den pik three pipul for go Parliament, two for be man en di one for be uman. That was her understanding of the Act because that was the interpretation of the men and that was what they knew about the Bill.

So Mr Speaker, I had to therefore go further to tell her that there is a portion in that Act that deals with the economic empowerment of women, and that it does not only cater for the educated elite; there is also a portion for business women. So Mr Speaker, we need the popularization of that Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we still have women who are working but are still suffering under the whims and caprices of wicked bosses, all in the name of maintaining their jobs.

Mr Speaker, that Act speaks a lot to the protection of women in their jobs, but do they know about it? No, and the culture of silence still prevails, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you seem to be in mid-flight, but I am sure by now the plane should be descending.

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Okay Mr Speaker, but this is a topic that is dear to me and I need to speak out with passion, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to popularize that Act. So allocating such a minimal amount to the Gender Ministry, for me, is like the Government's commitment in terms of Gender does not translate to the Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I cannot take my seat without lending my voice to the Transport Sector. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members...

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, would you kindly reserve that one for another day?

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: No, I need to say something because I want to advocate for the Western Urban District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have

had Buses to ease the transportation challenge within the Western Area Urban District which is a very good initiative. But Mr Speaker, some parts of our Districts like Allen Town has never benefited from this Bus Service. So, for a school going child who lives at Allen Town to access those bus services, he or she has to pay at times **NLe10** to come to Calaba Town to board the Bus. So I am advocating to the Transport Ministry to please make Allen Town a major transit point whenever these buses are available in town.

THE SPEAKER: On that note....

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: On that note Mr Speaker, I take my seat and rest my case *[Applause]*

HON. DICKSON ROGERS: Mr Speaker, you always say in this House that '*to thyself be truth*'. I listened to the argument from the other side talking about individual debate to last for about just 10mintues. Now they have allowed their colleague to speak for 25minutes. I am just bringing that up to your attention.

THE SPEAKER: No, no it was not 25minutes, she spoke for 18mintues *[Undertone]* no, no I have to be fair, 14mintues *[Undertone]* no, no, that clock is not quite correct, I am using mine. I now give the Floor to the Honourable Nenneh Lebbie.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I had wanted to go straight to the topic of discussion, which is this Budget but please allow me to preface my statement by just noting down some few corrections regarding what my esteemed Honourable sister said in relation to Agriculture or the importation of rice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, firstly, let my dear sister note that we really had no reason as Sierra Leoneans to import rice, we really have no reason. We have been feeding ourselves in this country. So let us go back to the drawing board; let us go and learn from our mistakes. If Sierra Leone used to feed itself and export some of our staple food to places like Banjul, Liberia and others, why have we not continued on that trajectory? Can we go back and ask the question as to why we are now importing food to this country?

Mr Speaker, I always take you as an example because we have elders who have their working ages different from their normal ages, and so they sometimes do not want to accept the fact that they are old enough to tell the story that Sierra Leone has been feeding itself. The structure got destroyed because of bad policy and bad governance, and that is the reason we should be here now as a Parliament to address the issue together.

Mr Speaker, that is why I applaud my President for taking **Feed Salone** as his flagship programme. The president has realized over the years that Sierra Leoneans are suffering, and that we have no reason to suffer because our soils are fertile enough to accommodate the kind of agriculture we want.

Mr Speaker, when we were in schools, we learnt during our Agriculture and Geography lessons that Moyamba used to export Ginger, of course Bonthe used to export Piassava although piassava was taken over by a Chinese Plastic company, and we had Kailahun responsible for exporting Coffee, Cocoa, Palm Kernel, etc. We had a lot of agricultural products to export from this country but where are we now? What is responsible for us as a country to fail in exporting some of these agricultural products, when we still have the same soil that yielded so much for us to export?

Mr Speaker, let us not be political; I really do not want to talk politics when it comes to this very serious matter. This is a budget and this is very serious for all of us, irrespective of party; this is a Budget for Sierra Leoneans, including you and me. Let us make sure we talk about things that will make us grow.

Mr Speaker, Rome was not built in a day, and the destruction over the years has been so massive that we need to come together as Sierra Leoneans. I always say that we need to come together, and until we come together, the Singapore status you were talking about can hardly be reached.

Mr Speaker, let me not take much time on this, so I would like to go to some of the issues to be addressed in this short speech. Mr Speaker, with your leave, allow me to

refer this House to Page 12 to 15, Paragraph 47 to 56, which has to do with Agriculture; a key sector to everybody in this country.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Minister and his team for bringing this Budget to the House. This Budget is timely, good, and I support it from the bottomless part of my heart because it has something good for us. **5%** increase on rice importation is prudent enough. Let us encourage our people to practice agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I told you last, I embarked on Agriculture the last season and I cultivated 10 Acres, although I did not get exactly what I wanted, perhaps due to first trial. But the fact remains, I enjoy participating in Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the good thing that God did for us as a nation is that He gave us a very fertile soil, and for which we must praise Him. Our soil is so fertile that whatever you plant you will never regret it. Let us encourage our people, particularly the youths to go back to the Villages and cultivate the lands in order to be able to feed ourselves. We cannot feed ourselves without participating in Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Agriculture is not just about planting rice, there is so much to cultivate; cassava, Potatoes, Yams etc. are very good substitutes. There is so much to benefit if we are involve in Agriculture because we will get a very good yield.

Mr Speaker, embarking on Agriculture is the right direction for this country. Initially, Tormabum, Rokuprr etc. used to be very active and effective in rice cultivation. But Mr Speaker, when Tormabum was dismantled over the years because of bad governance or Leadership, the country started going hungry. It is only when we revert to Agriculture that we will start talking about feeding ourselves or putting food on our tables.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes when people talk about agriculture they only think about rice and cassava. Of course fishing is also part of Agricultural activities. We all need protein in our diets, and so I want to encourage our people to go into active fish farming. Mr Speaker, we still have fishes in our seas and Rivers but let us not over use our waters. Let us see how we can improve on some of these fishing activities

and embark on fish farming. We have our inland swamps; let us utilize them for such purposes.

Mr Speaker, I have been in the Committee of Fisheries and Marine Resources for quite some time now and I know the constraints they have been going through. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, fishing activity itself has a lot of problems; I do not want to say it is cartel but believe me, it has a lot of problems. We need to improve on financing that Ministry. The success of the Ministry goes with activities, and if we do not properly monitor the fishing activities, we will not get the required benefit from it.

We even have artisanal fishermen who sell our fishes on sea to other foreign boats that invade our territory. They normally undertake such acts very late at night, and very early in the morning they would sneak back to their bases.

Mr Speaker, we have enough fish in our waters but we don't enjoy them because of lack of monitoring. The Ministry is highly constrained of vehicles; even the Director does not have a vehicle so how can she go out to monitor those places? We also do not have enough vehicles in Parliament to perform our oversight functions, and we cannot go out to help do our oversight at times because of this vehicle constrains.

The last time, UNDP donated Surveillance Boats to help in monitoring our seas but that too is being undermined. The sooner those Boats are about to leave to perform their duty, somebody will pick a phone and alert the invaders about the planned surveillance. And by the time the Surveillance Boats embark on the exercise, the whole area would have been sanitized.

The last time I suggested to the Ministry, and by extension the Finance Ministry that we should have at least one Drone to surveillance our seas for a better dividend in the fishing sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also need to encourage our women folks in the fishing sector because they are very active in that area. Of course we are going to be emphasizing that to the Fishing Agencies whenever we perform our oversight functions. I will be very firm when I go out to ensure that we see our women in front. We also

need to extend some of these services or facilities to other areas like Gbondapi and Sulima.

THE SPEAKER: And on that note.....

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please permit me to end up in just few more minutes. Mr Speaker, the Youth in fishing project is another very important aspect that we need to pay attention to. If we say we want to discourage our youths from taking drugs, we must encourage them to be viable or useful youths. That is why the youths in fishing project must be given some attention. Of course the last time His Excellency the President gave some Boats to the youths which also encouraged them. So let us make sure we improve on that, so that our youths can be engaged in something productive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said earlier, I am in full support of this Budget because it is good for our country. Let us make our people understand that whatever increment that is made is for the benefit of all of us. The country, as we know, needs money to pay salaries and implement other programmes. We are no longer under austerity, **S.O 2**, *'cut ya put ya'*. So we need money. We cannot rely too much on external donors to pay salaries, and we also need to build more schools. If you take statistics of the number of schools we have built in just 5 years you would be amazed. Because we prioritize education, we have constructed more Schools and given more Pin Codes to Teachers. So our salary scale has increased and we need a lot of other improvement in our lives.

Therefore Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we want to be like Singapore let us accept some of these increments so at the end of day we would be able to take care of our financial responsibilities.

So Mr Speaker, I want to encourage my colleagues on the other side to take politics off this discussion and treat it as Sierra Leoneans because this is a very serious budget, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. I now give the Floor to the Honourable John Sartty Kargbo.

HON. JOHN S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all the various contributors to this debate, and I also want to thank the Honourable Speaker for giving fair ruling to this Honourable debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard different shades of opinions from the various contributors, and I believe our duties and obligations as Honourable Members is to discuss issues of national interest with all fairness and sincerity *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Budget in question is about the running of the State affairs for the year 2024. The question I keep asking myself is what mechanism this Government has put in place in this Budget to reduce the burden and livelihood of the ordinary Sierra Leonean? To me, the answer is none.

Mr Speaker, I would like to zoom in on Page 12, Paragraph 47 and 48; Page 17, Paragraph 61 and Page 23, Paragraph 84.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is **5%** increment on the Excise Duty on Rice which is our major staple food in this country. The Minister of Finance clearly states in this Budget that Government is spending **\$200Mln** on the importation of rice. Mr Speaker, **5%** of **\$200Mln** is **\$10Mln**. Can **\$10Mln** be enough to take us to a level of self-food sufficiency in this country? The answer is no.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take a look at this Budget, you cannot see anything about shelter for the ordinary Sierra Leonean in this Budget; they only made mention about Social Safety-Net. Mr Speaker, I believe cost recovery shelter can be another important tool this Government can use to popularize its infrastructural ideology.

Mr Speaker, we also see an increment of **10%** on Cement and **20%** on Iron Rods in this Budget. Is that a solution for infrastructural development in this country? It is not, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I am therefore craving the indulgence of this Government to have a rethink because infrastructural development is very important.

Also Mr Speaker, I notice that this Government and the National Revenue Authority [NRA] are busy increasing taxes on the ordinary Sierra Leoneans. I want to make it clear that the NRA has a very weak system of collecting revenue in this country. Even though the threshold has been raised from Hundred Thousand to Five Hundred Thousand, not enough machines have been distributed by the NRA across the country. With the increment of Taxes on Cement and Iron Rods, even the ordinary man in Bueadu can be affected although the proceeds cannot reflect on the Government and the people of Sierra Leone because of weak mechanism by the NRA.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I look at this Budget, I see a projection of increment in the price of fuel again. Mr Speaker, the All People's Congress [APC] left fuel at **Le4, 500**. When the Sierra Leone Peoples Party [SLPP] came to governance in 2018, the first Budget in this Parliament saw the increase in the price of fuel to **Le6, 000**, and now we are buying fuel at **Le30, 000** with the possibility of increasing it to **Le35, 000**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am therefore appealing to the Minister of Finance to address the issue of taxation. When you look at the Withholding Tax on rent [**15%**] that too is a burden on the lives of the ordinary Sierra Leoneans. If I own a house and somebody wants to rent or buy it, I should tell him to pay the Withholding Tax before I allow him access to the property.

I am appealing to the Government to think about the livelihood of the ordinary Sierra Leonean because we are the representatives of people and we need to seek the interest of the ordinary man, I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Quintin Salia Konneh.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA KONNEH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am really very much disappointed in the way my colleagues on the other side are debating. It appears as if they rehearsed just to deliberately

condemn this Budget. With the exception of Honourable Timbo, there has never been a single debater from their side who has commended the President for all of the good things he has done; they are all condemning the activities of this Government. I believe as Sierra Leoneans, we have the responsibility to serve our people well.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order! Mr Speaker, for the records, this is not a Motion of thanks to thank the president, it is a Budget Debate, the Honourable Member should advise himself.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA KONNEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe as Sierra Leoneans we have the responsibility to serve our country. Just before I go to the Budget debate proper, I believe this country has it on record that it has always been the APC that is destroying the fabric of whatever we have been doing in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we go back to history, right from the days of Sir Milton Margai and Sir Albert Margai, we used to grow our own rice as a country. For some of you who are old enough can attest to the fact that we used to have Tormabum. But after President Stevens took over, that was when we met the nemesis as a country, and that was when we started experiencing the backward movement as a country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Tormabum that used to internally grow rice for us was destroyed during the APC reign. After the reign of Presidents Stevens and Joseph Saidu Momoh, President Kabbah came and did his level best to neutralize the negative and stabilized the situation. And before he exited, President Kabba left this country in positive direction, but after President Ernest Bai Koroma took over and ruled for two terms, he exited, leaving the country again in arrears. It was this current Government that actually took the responsibility to pay the liabilities left by President Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if our colleagues on the other side are saying our economy is struggling, why is it that they are having clandestine meetings, requesting the government to give them backlog?

They have already said that our Economy is struggling and yet they go quietly advocating for backlog to be given to them.

Mr Speaker, for me, when you talk about backlog it has to do with something you have worked for.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order Sir...

THE SPEAKER: Yes, what is your Point of Order?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what the Honourable from Kailahun is trying to purport here is completely contrary to what we stand for on this side of the Aisle.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you are all aware that we are here as a result of the outcomes of the dialogue that took place between the government of Sierra Leone...*[Interrupted]*

HON. BERNADETTE WUYATA SONGA: Mr Speaker, can the Honourable Member help us with the Standing Order he is standing on? Standing Orders please; give us your Standing Order. We want to know your Standing Order.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, unfortunately the Honourable from Kailahun was not even listening. I advise her to do some medical check-up on her hearing abilities. She was not listening. I did stand... *[Interruption]*

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, Point of Order! Mr Speaker, it is an insult for the Honourable Member to tell a female MP that she needed to go for medical check-up.

HON. BERNADETTE WUYATTA SONGA: You will need to do some medical checks on your psychological being.

HON. BASHRIU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I am standing on **S.O** 32[8]...

HON. DAINEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I Stood on 32[9] and I was still on my legs when the Honourable from Kailahun interrupted because she never listened. I did state my Point of Order.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, based on what he has said, I have stood on **S.O** 32 [8]

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, you had given me the Floor and I am still on my legs.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader, imagine you begin on 32 [8] and somebody else stands on another Standing Order and refuses to allow you to complete. The Honourable Member is standing on a Standing Order, allow him to complete and when he finishes, you can come with your own Standing Order.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable Member, can you read **S.O** 32[8]?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I will read 32 [9] after 32 [8]. After my presentation, we will go to 32 [8].

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Okay read 32 [9] and 32 [8] in tandem. Read 32 [9], what does it say?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I will read 32 [8] after I finish my presentation on 32 [9].

THE SPEAKER: Alright, alright.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Read 32 [9], it will not help you.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, it seems as if Honourable Members you are citing to me 32 [8] and 32 [9], they appear to cancel each other out; one is talking about imputing improper motives, the other is talking about not using offensive or insulting language.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I am yet to land because the point the Honourable Members from Kailahun is raising is very important.

HON. BERNADETTE WUYATTE SONGA: You will not land because you have been inappropriate to the House. As a senior Member of Parliament you are being very inappropriate so sit down *[Interruptions]*.

THE SPEAKER: I am inviting both of you Leaders; to come forward, both of you, please *[the two Leaders of the House approached Mr Speaker]*

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I believe I still have the Floor. Standing on **S.O** 32 [9], as I said earlier, the Honourable Member from Kailahun is clearly imputing improper motive on us from this side. And as can be evidenced, thank God we are live, Sierra Leoneans can see the reaction of the SLPP Members of Parliament from that

other side regarding improper motive. They are all shouting '*no backlogs, no backlogs*'. You think we are here for backlogs? You think we are not aware of your stolen majority? You are telling us about backlogs, we are here as a result of the dialogue agreement by the government of Sierra Leone and us on this side. We are here as a result of the dialogue agreement that was reached by His Excellency the President and the Opposition Members of Parliament here. And then you think we are here for backlog? You think we are not aware of your stolen majority? *[Interruptions]*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Honourable Members! I would now stand the House down until sanity returns.

[The House stood down at 11:20am and Resumed at 11:40am]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, take your seats. Are the two Leaders in their seats? Where is the Leader of the Opposition?

Honourable Members, what you have just demonstrated beyond all reasonable imagination is the fragility of the peace that the dialogue between the two major parties produced; it is very clear. To me, it is clear to the outside world that the peace that so much time was spent to bring about by the Leadership of the two main Political Parties represented in this House remains as fragile as you possibly could imagine; that is what you have demonstrated so vividly in the last few minutes.

Now, I am going to ask all of you, if you remember, before this debate starts I reminded all of you of the pertinent provisions that underpin the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill.

Maybe it beacons on me to go over it again by way of a reminder, so that matters that are completely extraneous to debate will not be brought into the debate *[Applause]*.

If you adhere to the **S.Os** as diligently as I expected you would, this rancour would not have resulted- but it bears repeating again. By a way of a reminder just in case some of you have forgotten or you chose to ignore the demands of the **S.Os**, and I will start with **S.O 63**[3].

What it tells you there, it says, *"after the Bill has been read the first time, it shall be put down for Second Reading [which we are going through now] not less than two clear days thereafter, and five days shall be allotted for the second reading of the Bill"*

And now let me read again, reiterate, reemphasize, re-echo the most important part of that **S.Os**; it says, *"The debate shall be confined to the financial and economic state of Sierra Leone and the general principles of Government Policy and Administration as indicated by the Bill and its estimates"*.

That last sentence is further amplified in **S.O 32[5]** again. I read for your edification; *"A Member must confine his observations to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto"*.

What you have just done is a flagrant violation of the Standing Orders; by introducing matters that are completely extraneous to the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill. And you should all be ashamed of yourselves, all of you who shouted; I am talking about both sides. Look at you, adults for that matter who claim to be Honourable Members *[Interruption]* no, no, please take your seat.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, this is an Honourable House, we are live on TV. This is an Honourable House, Sir. You have reminded us of the Standing Orders. This is an Honourable House you should not address us like that, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: From now on, I will not entertain anyone who strays beyond the subject matter under discussion. Confine yourselves to debating the Budget that has been read by the Minister of Finance, that's all. You have squandered the privilege of continuing *[Undertone]* no, no.....I'm sorry, no,no.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: This is the Speaker ruling, and we expect it to be final.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, you have addressed.....

THE SPEAKER: No, no, I am not going to entertain him anymore

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, please, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker,

THE SPEAKER: I will not entertain the Member....

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Please, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, you have addressed this House adequately; you have referred us to the provisions of the law.

THE SPEAKER: He knew the provisions before, he knew them.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, you have reminded us of the provisions of the law; you have reminded us of the provisions of the law, Mr Speaker. We crave on your indulgence for us to continue this debate in harmony. You have addressed all of us as Members of Parliament and we have understood.

THE SPEAKER: He squandered the privilege I gave him; he does not deserve a second chance.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, please let us continue with the debate. Mr Speaker, we are a family; this is a family House. We are Members of Parliament, you have reminded us of the laws and I believe the Honourable Members will be guided. Please, Mr Speaker this is a family thing, we have had our issues, you advised us and we have settled down, so let us move forward so we reduce the tension in the House please, Mr Speaker.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader, in as much as we are all aware of **S.O 42** which impinges on the ruling of Mr Speaker, and I am sure he is doing it to save the House from further rancour. Of course we were much comforted; the House was cool, calm and calculated this morning. Some of the statements we uttered made the House very ungovernable. And to prevent that, we have to create a situation in which those who have tendencies to use similar words that would bring this House to the state that we were should be prevented from talking. That is what I think, that is my feeling and Mr Speaker has ruled on that.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, please I would crave on your indulgence that since you have addressed us, we are Members of Parliament, we are colleagues, and whatever has gone wrong has already happened. We have gone into your Chamber, we

discussed and you addressed us and cited the necessary provisions of the law. For us to reduce tension he would be guided by the Constitution and the Standing Orders which you have reminded him about. Please give him the rest of his time to conclude, Sir, please, thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Leader ought to know that **S.O** 42 is clear and the Speaker has repeated the ruling more than twice, and if there was anything you were going to ask for, that would have been for him to be given another bite tomorrow, possibly... *[Interrupted]*

HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE: It is against the Standing Orders! He was not...

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: The Speaker has ruled on this

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable, you are right. I know and that is why we are craving on his indulgence *[Interruption]* no, hold on.....

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Or else we would have situations in which we would ask the Speaker after his ruling to allow things to happen even after he has ruled. **S.O** 42 is instructing, Mr Leader...

HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE: He was not cautioned. Whatever the tension has been, it was between himself and the Deputy Leader. We have spoken about that and we are done with it. Mr Speaker has cited the necessary provision on the Floor, please.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader, like we discussed, we believe Parliament is run by Leadership, and I want to seize this opportunity to implore all Members of Parliament on this side; it is incumbent on you to respect the Leadership on that side, and those of Members of Parliament on that side should also respect the Leadership on this side. So it is very un-procedural and unprofessional for an Ordinary Member of Parliament to interject a Leader whiles he is on the Floor, please, please.

HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, please I would appeal, he was not cautioned in the process of the debate; he raised issue that was challenged by the Opposition Deputy Leader and we have settled that. Can we give him 5 minutes to summarize his statement?

THE SPEAKER: Even if I have to reconsider, I am not going to do so now.

HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE: Then he cannot.....

THE SPEAKER: I will not do so now!

HON. BASHIRIU SILIKIE: Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I would now give the Floor to another speaker, the Honourable Mabinty Taylor-Bangura *[Applause]*

HON. MABINTY A. TAYLOR-BANGURA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mabinty Alice Taylor-Bangura Honourable is my name, representing the people of Kambia District *[Applause]*

May I use this singular honour to thank, appreciate and acknowledge the people of Kambia District in general, and the resilient and no nonsense people of Samu Chiefdom for supporting, campaigning and voting for me and my party, the All People's Congress in the just concluded June 24th 2023 General Elections. May I also hasten to thank the Leadership of the All People's Congress, its supporters and members for awarding me their most precious symbol to contest in the just concluded elections *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as today marks my maiden speech in this Honourable House, mistakes are mine, and I want to entreat all Members to either accept or ignore them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the first Bullion to come to this House as a Member of Parliament, I rise to critically examine the Budget Speech read by the

Minister of Finance on the 10th of November 2023. And I want to particularly focus on one key area; this area I know has direct impact on the lives of my people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of course we all know that the Feed Salone; "*Boosting Agricultural Production*" on Paragraph 47 to 56, Page 12 of this document spoke about Feed Salone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, while the initiative to acquire food self-sufficiency is the way to go, and very much laudable for our people, you would realise that in this document, the amount appropriated to Agriculture is minimal and even worrisome; it is abysmal to say the least, and it is even appalling, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how does this Government want to feed Sierra Leone with a Budget of **7%** allocated to Agriculture? That amount we all know is way below the **10%** we signed to in the Maputo Protocol.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw our attention to the 70s and the 80s. Mr Speaker, you would bear me witness that during those times Sierra Leone was able to feed itself and even export rice to other countries in the Sub region.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this happened under the leadership of the Late President Siaka Probyn Stevens and the All Peoples Congress Party. So feeding Sierra Leone is not a novelty.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during those times, we all could attest that conscious efforts were made that the Government by then formulated policies to boost agriculture; the Government formulated Institutions like the SLPMB. Other Agricultural Institutions like the Rice Research Station and the West Africa Rice Development Association [WARDA] at Rokopr, including the Seed Multiplication Project situated at Mambolo Chiefdom were also instituted during those times.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, farming at that time was not only done seasonally or for subsistence; we had mechanized farming with irrigated farms. Mr Speaker,

conscious efforts and not political rhetoric were made to achieve food self-sufficiency at the time Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we have in this document are policies I would refer to as political gimmicks, and these gimmicks, I know, are to continuously fool our people. We have a document that intends to starve Sierra Leone to death rather than feeding Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, I think if this Government had wanted to feed Sierra Leone it should have piloted the Feed Salone project before the implementation; of course the Government should have piloted the project before the introduction of the **5%** tax on rice. Mr Speaker we all know that rice is our staple food.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, but here is a Government that has decided to put empty spoons in our mouths. **S.O** [2], Mr Speaker; *den wan put san-san na we garri en we nor go gree.*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, including Madam Minister, I know you are aware of the adage that says, "A hungry man is an angry man".

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to put it to this Government that they cannot feed Sierra Leone; this Government cannot feed Sierra Leone with the current Exchange Rate of **Le22,369** Old Leones for a Dollar, and more so with the projected Exchange Rate of **Le28,945** Old Leones for 2024.

Mr Speaker, with the continuous depreciation of the Leones over the years, we know that Farmers will tend to take their produce to neighbouring countries, for example Guinea. Some of us that are from the Border Districts can attest to the fact that, **S.O** [2], *'den dae even cook en go sell Yehbeh , Gbohdor en Banana Cake na Guined'* because of the Exchange Rate, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will put it to this Government again that they cannot feed Sierra Leone with the current mind-set of the average Sierra Leonean, especially towards our local Parboiled Rice, **S.O** [2], *'we all know say Salone man dae say wala Res dae flop me belleh, en wala Res dae flop me mot'*.

Mr Speaker, efforts should have been made to educate and sensitize Sierra Leoneans before the implementation of Feed Salone; we should have educated Sierra Leoneans on the health benefits of eating our local rice instead of importing rice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would say again that this Government cannot feed Sierra Leone. The reason been, when it comes to the distribution of Budget for the implementation of the much talked about Seed Rice, Fertilizers and Agro-Chemicals as indicated on Page 14, Paragraph 52; '*sustaining support to Small Holder Farmers through the E-Voucher platform*', I know this Government will only distribute the Seed Rice, Fertilizer and the Agro-Chemicals to its SLPP supporters, leaving the real farmers behind.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy as a representative and my people of Kambia are happy. Mr Speaker we are happy because Kambia District is among the sixth Agro-Ecological Zones for rice production.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, may I conclude by saying that Feed Salone will succeed if and only if Kambia is fully utilized. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kambia has the capacity to feed Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member on that note....

HON. MABINTY TAYLOR-BANGURA: On that note Mr Speaker, may I list the major food stuff that we produce in Kambia:

1. Kambia produces rice which is our stable food
2. Kambia produces fish which is nutritious and has economical implication to this country; it brings in foreign currency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you for your attention [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: We would adjourn for lunch at this point and resume at 1:30pm. Madam Minister, you are excused.

[The House stood down for lunch at 12:05 and resumed at 1:30pm]

Debate continues...

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would give the Floor again to Honourable Maada Lebby

HON. AMBROSE MAADA LEBBY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank the Minister of Finance and his team from the Ministry for putting together this document. For me, I consider this document to be a '*Kombra Budget*', S.O [2] [*Applause*]

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Western Area, the Honourable Abdal Timbo yesterday mentioned about the importation of Plantain Chips into this country. Yes Mr Speaker, this is the very reason why His Excellency the President in his wisdom has decided to declare operation Feed Salone. If we want to eradicate the importation of food stuffs in this country; agricultural products, especially rice, onion and the like, I am calling on Members of Parliament on that side to support the drive. We must deviate from the Adebayoh's syndrome and support the government of His Excellency the President; we must deviate from the abusive languages that have been trumpeting in this country for 5 years [*Applause*]

The Honourable Member from Western Area again made mention of the Singapore case which Mr Speaker brought to this Parliament when he was welcoming our colleagues on the first day from their boycott.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we look at the industrialization process on going at the Songo community, you would realize that President Bio is on the right trajectory of transforming this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another Honourable Member from Bombali again made mention of the **5%** import duty on rice. In 2018 when President Bio came to power, this Government inherited a **10%** tax which we waived off. During that period, the price of food commodities especially rice kept sky rocketing constantly on a daily basis for a simple reason; because most of the business people were not honest to Sierra Leoneans. Irrespective of the removal of the **10%** Import Duty, they constantly maintained the upward mobility of increase in rice cost.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today the Minister and his team in their wisdom decided to bring back **5%** in order to benefit Sierra Leoneans. If we are getting **5%** Tax from the importation of rice, I think a lot of things can be utilized from that money. For example, support to the Free Quality Education, support to the Feed Salone project, support to the free Health Care project and many more.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another Honourable Member from Western Area, the lady, made mention of the School Project. Mr Speaker, President Bio promised every Constituency at least one Secondary School which he did. We all saw when the President commissioned all of those projects, but I know our brothers from the other side will not stand there to praise the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are grade **A** schools that are benefitting from that project; the Magbruaka Boys School of which the Honourable Leader from the other side came from; he is from that school.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, *[Interruption]*

HON. AARON A KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order, Sir. Mr Speaker, for the records, the renovation of the Magburaka Boys School has not commenced since the pronouncement in 2019; no school has been built in my Constituency, Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Leader that is not correct.

HON. AMBROSE M. LEBBY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my Honourable colleague again made mention of Bus transportation for Allen Town. I want to assure the Honourable Member that through the I-RUN Project, the 50 buses are here as I speak- this is a *'Tok and Do'* Government. The Integrated, Resilient Urban Mobility [I-RUN] Project is here to stay. This is just a pilot phase, and if we succeed in it with your support, we will transform the transportation system in this country. There has to be dedicated Bus service for public transportation. Brothers and sisters from the other side let us support His Excellency the President to transform this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the 80s, there were Agricultural projects in this country, but it is sad today to see those projects closed. For some of those who were in Administration then, whether in Parliament or in the Executive Arm of Government

[who were part of the process] that saw those projects closed should today bow their heads in shame.

If we are talking about Singapore, Sierra Leone should have been the Singapore of West Africa today. Some of those people are on records; they were speaking big English and causing more trouble in this Well then- the archives can speak to that.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is referring to Members of Parliament who were here in the 80s of which none of them is in this Well now to defend themselves *[Undertone]* no wait, we cannot insult people who have suffered and have defended this nation in the 80s. That is unfortunate, we cannot allow anybody to do that; you cannot degrade them, you cannot.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I was here; I am one of those who was here in the 80s *[Laughter]* but I would ignore the statement, carry on.

HON. AMBROSE M. LEBBY: Thank you Mr Speaker for your sincerity, thank you. The Honourable Member is claiming that none of them is here today to defend themselves.

THE SPEAKER: How would he know? He wasn't born then *[Laughter]*

HON. AMBROSE M. LEBBY: Exactly, exactly! So thank you Mr Speaker for protecting me, at least for once; for exonerating me for once, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, if those projects were alive today, Sierra Leone would have been in a food sufficient state at this moment. Mr Speaker, I am today crying loud to my colleagues on the other side; let us forget about '*Tolongbolization*' and focus on Sierra Leone, let us forget about '*Tolongbolization*' and think about transformation. That is the very reason why President Bio has decided to revolutionize this country, especially in the Agricultural sector. I am calling on both sides of the Well to kindly support President Bio; let be Paopa for Salone to get better, thank you *[Applause]*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, I now give the Floor to the Honourable Musa Fofanah.

HON. MUSA FOFANAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my names are Honourable Sahr Pormasu Musa Fofanah from Kono District. I want to stand on the Sierra Leone Constitution, Section 7[d], Mr Speaker with your leave.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Section 7[d] says, *"please prepare an adequate emphasis on Agriculture in all its aspect so as to ensure self-sufficiency in food production"*. Mr Speaker, the more reason why I want to stand on this Constitutional provision is because the SLPP Government has demonstrated for the last 6 years in this country that they are really a responsible Government and a Government that has come for a real change.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you check the 1979 Tormabum Act, you will notice that the word 'Agriculture' has only been respected by the SLPP Government in this country. Mr Speaker, for 57 years of our history, the only Government that has paid attention to the word 'Agriculture' is the SLPP Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I decided to quote this particular Constitutional Provision because the word '**Feed Salone**' is the only option this country has. Mr Speaker, you may want to ask yourself why Train was removed. I think the Train was removed because it was more or less benefitting the South-Eastern Region of this country- that was the only reason. But today, a Government has stood in this country to respect the Rule of Law and respect development across the nation. Mr Speaker, I am saying this with no sentiment; I am from the North; my mother and father are from the North, Kambia and Kerene respectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at Water Resources in this Budget, you would realise that the Government is talking about rehabilitation of the Sela-Limba Water Facility or the Degrimon Project in Sela-Limba and the Mambolo Water Facility. This is a form of a National Cohesion as you can see from the SLPP angle of governance.

Mr Speaker, let me go to the road system; why road? Madam Minister, we want to see the Koidu- Guinea Highway in this Budget, we want to see the Bumpeh-Mano Junction in this Budget and we want to see the Koindu Water Facility in this Budget *[Applause]*

But despite that Mr Speaker, this Budget is a palatable Budget, is a rational Budget, and is one of the best budgets I have seen because this Budget is speaking to issues.

Mr Speaker, let me now touch on the roads: Mr Speaker, in 5 years in this country's in history, the SLPP Government has demonstrated that indeed they believe in fixed system; we give mandate to people, we monitor them and we fix them. The SLPP Government took power when the Rogbreh Bridge and the Mabang Bridges were just at the beginning, including the Hill Side Bypass Road which is yet to be completed. These were all projects from the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah.

Mr Speaker, if you go to Page 1 of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's speech regarding roads, with your leave, Mr Speaker let me read; *'as soon as the war ended, my Government assiduously embarked upon the task of repairing and restoring the road network with the help of the Kuwait Government, the BADEA World Bank, Africa Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank etc. etc. The following roads have either been constructed or are under construction; the Korribondo-Blama-Gendema Ferry Road...'*

Till now Mr Speaker, **S.O** [2] *'da road dae den nor do natin pa nam, na we kam regrade am'.*

Mr Speaker, the Makeni-Kamakwe Road, the Korribondo-Kabala axis, the Masiaka-Makeni Roads are still not completed. Work is in progress in the North on several roads. The Masiaka-Bo Road, mainly in the South and the Tokeh-Lumley Road in the Western Area are all been completed by this Government.

Mr Speaker, almost 16years of the former Government in power, they cannot fix these roads; a project that was left behind by the former President. Mr Speaker I am relating to these roads because I want you to also understand something.

Furthermore Mr Speaker, I strongly recommend that Mr President pays attention to the Kenema-Koindu road, for which funding is secured from the Arab Bank [OPEC], and the Tender Document which is under preparation is almost on the way. The President also said that seed money has been secured from NACSA for the Koindu Market.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the question I want to ask is that why is it that the project for the construction of Kenema-Kailahun-Koindu Road as was captured in this document only ended up being implemented as Kenema-Pendembu Road? It is the SLPP Government that came and fixed that road from Pendembu to Kailahun. A **\$10Mln** additional funding was given but in almost 10years they could not complete that road.

Mr Speaker, my other question is where is the NASCA seed money that was secured for the Koindu market? Mr Speaker, if you go further in this document, you will see something about the Masiaka-Koidu road. Most times when these issues are raised they would say Government is continuity; yes, we agree that Government is continuity but today, because it is the SLPP you do not want to agree that this Government is a responsible Government, and pragmatic Government that is ready to do the right thing

Mr Speaker, let me skip this for now and go to the issue of the Economy. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the handing over statement of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, he said, *'my Government has waived **\$1.6Bln** as a loan this country inherited for years'*.

Mr Speaker, it is in this document; in 2018 when the President was making his speech here, the **\$1.6Bln** came back as debt for this country. Mr Speaker, another worse situation was an internal debt of **Le19Trillion**; if you put that into figure, is almost above **\$3Bln**.

Mr Speaker, this is more the reason why the economic situation of this country is very, very stressful and today they are blaming the SLPP Government. But as a responsible Government, we do not want to cry because we believe in the mantle of leadership and because we want to lead, this is more the reason why we believe that Sierra Leone problem will be fixed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to shift to the additional projects this Government has succeeded in delivering. Mr Speaker, let forget about the completion of the Mabang Bridge, the Rogbere Bridge, the Liberia Highway, the Moa Bridge, Gendema Bridge and other Bridges.

Mr Speaker, the Moyamba Junction- Moyamba Town Road was in this document and it has only been completed now. Mr Speaker, I want you to also known that even when President Bio was going to Election, he was still busy going around commissioning bridges and other mega projects; four major bridges where commissioned, including the Sella Limba Tomparay Ferry, the Gedema Ferry in Kenema District, the Badajuma Ferry between Kono and Kailahun Districts, and that of the Mattru Jong. Mr Speaker, despite all of these, we still have people who are saying here that the President does not want to play his role. Mr Speaker, the 'Maadabiorization' strategy is one of the best strategies we have seen in the Democracy of this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the more reason I want to talk on the minerals is that some people are saying today that Tonkolili is the main producer of our minerals and that Tonkolili is the bread basket of this Country. Yes, we agree, but I want people to know that 93 years of this Country's history my District Kono has been under a huge cabal of exploitation, Mr Speaker. Despite the huge amount of minerals mined from Kono, we have never benefited from any tangible projects different from any other District. Mr Speaker it is only now that we have seen a University being constructed in Kono, it is only now that we have seen Electricity supply in Kono for almost 1 year 6 months uninterrupted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is nobody in this Country who can lecture us about APC or SLPP. My district is the only District in the history of this country where a Mayor was dismissed at 1:00pm and a Vice President was dismissed at 2:00pm. Such actions are recipe for chaos, but because my clan is a civilized clan, we decided to wait and go to the ballot box in 2018 to teach those who did that to us a lesson.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now touch on the Midterm National Development Plan of this Country. Mr Speaker, some people are saying that the SLPP Government is wasting time, but I want such people to know that this document has been a blessing to this country. Why is it that the MCC record is always going up and not stagnating or coming down? The SLPP graph is a graph that never stagnates or goes down; it always goes up because the Government succeeded in building a Midterm National Plan that stands the test of time. The reason for this is because we took the African Union [AU] Agenda 2063 into consideration, we took the Maputo Protocol into consideration, we took the Sustainable Development Goals into consideration, and today we are trying to review the 2019-2023 Midterm National Development Plan.

Mr Speaker, our President was in Belgium and even though the engagement was around Climate Change, the President presented the issue of the **Feed Salone** to the rest of the world. The President has already calculated the Feed Salone project to **\$800mIn**. Mr Speaker, can you imagine, people are auguring here about **\$24MIn** for Tormabum, and as a responsible Government we are talking about **\$800MIn**. Mr Speaker, if these should have not involved us into a debt of **Le1.6BIn**, then we don't need more at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end by assuring this country that we are not playing to the Gallery, neither we want to be recorded by SLBC or AYV; we are Members of Parliament that are credible, we say the truth and we are ready to stand by the truth. On that note therefore, I want the people from Kono District to believe that

this Government is the right Government for this country and we will continue to do the right thing. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I now give the Floor to the Honourable Tamba Kellie *[Applause]*

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Thank you Mr Speaker. First and foremost Mr Speaker, I want to reiterate my congratulations to you on your re-election as Speaker of this August Chamber of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: I wish you were here when it was done *[Laughter]*

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, I am filled with elation participating in a debate of our National Budget in this National Chamber presided over by you. Cocoon and sclerotic in the knowledge that if I stray I would be instantaneous brought back within the guard-well of legality.

Mr Speaker, let me join all previous speakers in thanking the Minister of Finance, his Deputies and the personal of the Finance Department of a job well done in putting this document together.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my contribution is focused on three areas of this Budget. These areas are to found on Page 33, under the rubric, '***Infraction and Technology***'

Mr Speaker, for the sake of brevity and clarity of explanation, I have divided my contribution into two segments; the first segment deals with Roads and Water, and the second deals with Energy which is actually my area of specialization although I am a Lawyer by training.

Mr Speaker, my contribution is deliberately and unapologetically ethnocentric in relation to the first segment. Mr Speaker, the reason for that is simple; it would be a complete dereliction of my responsibility to the people of Kono who elected me to this House, and

an egregious betrayal of the trust they have reposed in me if I do not point out the inequity meted out to the District of Kono by this Budget.

Mr Speaker, I take you back to Page 33, under the rubric '**Roads**' and Page 34 under the rubric '**Water**'. Mr Speaker, there is not a width, not a veneer, not a sinter, not a modicum and not an iota of reference to Kono. Yet, in the period leading to the just concluded Elections, the entire District of Kono and every Electricity Transmission and Distribution Pole was adorned with pictures of His Excellency and inscribed with the words '**Kono Matters to me**'.

Mr Speaker, if the expression '**Kono matters to me**' equate to the total exclusion of Kono from development aspiration; Roads and Water, then I there say '*Kono better not matter to anyone*'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to be very brief and so I would now move to the area of Energy. Mr Speaker, there is no gain saying or denial that Energy plays a critical role in the society. Mr Speaker, Energy has various implications; poverty alleviation, population, health, the environment and invariably influencing National Economic Development. In this respect, I have to commend the present Government for expanding Electricity supply up to **27.49%** from a figure of **26.10%** when we left office in 2018

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, for clarification, what is **27.10%**? We do not have **27.10%** in figures, Sir.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: I meant twenty seven point one-zero [27.10]. Mr Speaker, as I said, Electricity is an essential facility; is very necessary in our lives which why I commend this Government for expending access to Electricity to your people. When I returned to this country in 2008, I was a Legal Counsel for the National Power Authority and I was part of the unbundling of that sector. I then became the Director General of Sierra Leone Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission.

HON. MUSA FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Point of Order [34]. Mr Speaker, with documentary evidence, I have the Mid Term Review of the implementation of Sierra Leone and I can give you for clarification. Mr Speaker, the baseline for this document 2018, Electricity was **15.0 %**, if you come to 2023, is **44%**. Mr Speaker if you need this document I will send it to you for clarification, thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, by reason of my training, I have learnt not to be derailed by irrelevancies. Mr Speaker, I was part of the team, together with the likes of the then Financial Secretary in putting together CLSG Project, and I actually saw its implementation right up to 2018 when I was extirpated from my job.

Mr Speaker, whiles I applaud the Government for expanding Electricity to our people, my problem is, that over the years, because of the importance of Electricity, Government after Government has had unalloyed proclivity to pour huge sums of money into that sector; the Energy Sector under APC as well as under this Government.

However, whiles I don't argue with the figures earmarked for the Energy Sector especially that devoted to Mini-grids; a small scale Electricity generation that uses distribution system rather than the Transition System, and that is the best way of taking Electricity to your people in the Rural or far flunked areas, I however have a problem with the huge sums been given to EDSA.

Mr Speaker, we are been asked to approve that huge sum for EDSA for whatever reasons without any Data, especially given that only a few months ago the tariff was almost doubled. We have no Data on their Finances, their Cash Flow; are they actually transferring inefficiencies in the system to consumers?

So my question to the Minister; what assurance or assurances can you give us; this nation that the injection of that missive amount of money would result in improved service delivery and further expansion of Electricity to our people especially in the rural areas?

THE SPEAKER: And with that

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, on that note, let me thank you again for giving me the privilege to talk in this Chamber, especially....

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THE SPEAKER: And you may have the last word.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, the last one is; Kono better not matter to anyone who is not genuinely interested in the affairs of Kono. As a small tribe Mr Speaker, we have long clamoured for protection, and when we gravitate towards the dispensation for protection we do not want to be disappointed, and the Konos will never forget the total abandonment of that District in this Budget, thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Joseph Bash Kamara

HON. ABDUL JOSEPH BASH KAMARA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker for according me the opportunity to speak to this document.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, present day happenings across the globe has expanded the Economic problems, and hence Sierra Leone being a dependent nation should soften the effect, and this is the reality I want all of you to accept. The Economic programs, the management and the travels of His Excellency that you have been blowing vuvuzela about have turned the situation around by installing Donor confidence in this country; something we have been struggling about. All of you can attest to the fact that travelling with quality citizens of the Republic of Sierra Leone has generated funds for the development of the country. It is not as previously where our leaders travelled with people like Gallon-Pan and Sara Di Great who had no importance but just to waste State resources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am a village Member of Parliament; therefore I am dwelling on contemporary issues used by some people to misinform the illiterate

population. I am therefore dwelling on Taxation which is the area where some people blow their Vuvuzelas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Taxation is not new in this country and across the World. The essence of Taxation is to generate Revenue in order to be able to address the problems of the people. The Taxation people are talking about is not new; there have been taxes on Rice and other Commodities for which people are now blowing out of proportion. It is as a result of the good Leadership and humanitarian spirit of His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio that we started giving Tax concessions in this House.

Mr Speaker, under your leadership, we have given a lot of Tax holidays and concessions to manufactures and business people in this country with the intended purpose of producing and flooding the market with Cement, Iron Rod etc. so that prices will naturally reduce for our people in this Country. We have waived Taxes on Rice all these while so that people importing Rice can sell it at an affordable price. All of you can attest to it that all these concessions have not yielded anything for us. If these concessions have not yielded the desired effect, it is but inevitable for us to now take a drastic step to solve a drastic situation we find ourselves in today. We are going to levy Taxes so that we can now generate revenue to be able to service the gaps that will emerge.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, nobody can deny this one; we are definitely going to implement it. All of us know the truth but some of us are not sincere to speak the truth. In my view, when you are in opposition, the ruling party needs your genuine advice and direction so we can think and plan together. But unfortunately, Sierra Leone opposition is a completely different scenario.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now touch on Education. One thing we must bear in mind is the fact that the Budget we are talking about is a progressive Budget; it is taken from previous Budget to address issues as we move on. So I cannot discuss this Budget without linking it to previous expenditure that has been made. And in this

case, people have spoken lengthily about Education but I will just draw your attention to something. We have spent monies on Education but the results are rife; the results are all in our villages, from Kalangba, Bombali, all over, monies have been spent to pay School Fees.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for 11years under the Agenda for Prosperity and the fastest growing Economy we have been busy chasing Ghost Teachers. For 11years we could not give Teachers Pin Codes and pay them for 11years. Now you are expecting this Government to turn the situation around in 5 years- that is very unfair.

But that notwithstanding, we have endeavoured as a government to increase the Budget and give jobs to Teachers. We have employed more Teachers, enrolment in Schools has increased and we are feeding your Children. All these things are happening because we are raising Taxes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to throw light on some of the realities you know but you are reneging to tell the people of Sierra Leone- this is very sad. Honourable Members, providing food for the children of the people you are representing is not an easy task. That is why sometimes we get angry when you refuse to appreciate and say thanks to us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the area of Agriculture, all previous Presidents in the Republic of Sierra Leone committed to provide food on the Table for the poor. You know what the erstwhile President Ernest Bai Koroma talked about providing food for the People of Sierra Leone; you also know what the late President Alhaji Ahmad Tejan kabbah said about providing food for people in this Country. Today, His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio has also made a commitment to provide food for the people of this Country. But let me tell you, as Chairman of the Agricultural Committee, we have committed to do a post-mortem to understand why the Commitments made by both President Tejan Kabbah and Ernest Bai Koroma to support Agriculture did not work. We believe this is a sensible and realistic measure to take.

The reason why President Bio has made Agriculture his priority is because our Agriculture is in shambles. So what we expect of you is to look at these realities, understand the context and join hands with us rather than making all sorts of comments. If you take a look at Agriculture, you would realise that all the Agricultural structures have been damaged in this Country. If you go to Rokopr and look at the Research Station you would notice that everything has been vandalised. We can certainly not just jump into production without setting up these structures. During our first five years, we went a long way in setting up these structures which are now almost ready to start producing Rice for you to feed on.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Let me just tip on Infrastructure. One sad reality is that Sierra Leoneans, including Politicians have lost the morality of preserving what we have. In a situation of not having enough Medical facilities like Hospitals, in a situation where we do not have enough Electric Cables for electrification and in a situation where we do not have machines, and yet we have Politicians that are dancing and romancing with people stealing Electric Cables, burning down Hospitals and damaging Transformers. Can we in such situation expect our nation to develop? Certainly no! In a circumstance where we do not have enough and we are destroying the little that we should have preserved, are we bound to develop? Certainly no!

Therefore Honourable Members, political will needs to be reflected in order to support economic development. Mr Speaker, because of time, I cannot respond to all the issues but I wish to borrow a page from the Honourable from Bombali. When the Honourable was submitting to this House, he seemed to be a positive Politician. He mentioned certain things ironically; he congratulated people that were rulers of the opposition that also congratulated other Members there. These are all the moral lessons we need to have in this House. If you cannot congratulate your own Leader and you rush to congratulate other Leaders, what does that tell you in the reverse? This is a moral lesson we need to learn. If the former President and Vice President can congratulate a President elect, this should be a lesson we must learn from. Boycotting the governance machinery will affect development.

The Budget you are critiquing now because Sierra Leone is poor is the same Budget that people want to lick their hands from. Honourable Members is it permissible for you to criticise? 'We are poor, the Budget is poor, and the Budget is not progressive and developmental'. With all of these excuses and descriptions you are making, is it necessary again for you to chop from the Budget unnecessarily? *[Laughter]* Certainly not!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the break I had discussion with some Members of the Opposition and realistically, they are in sympathy with the government regarding the Economies situation in Sierra Leone; they are in support of the Taxes we are levying on people. And because we are levying these Taxes, they are letting the people understand it as if these Taxes are new even though these Taxes have been in existence since the reign of former President Ernest Bai Koroma. It is only when His Excellency President Bio came that he decided to give Tax Waivers on a lot of commodities. We all know that it is through the Budget that we can service the people at Abacha Street, bring in food and provide other essential services for the poor people. The Budget you are now criticizing is actually intended to generate revenue to service all our problems. Most of you from the North are crying that you do not have roads in places like Kabala, Kamasonko and Kamakwe. But for God sake, let us think for a moment and reflect. During your regime, you said you were the fastest growing economy, and because of that you became a prosperous nation, but in that prosperity you failed to provide Roads for Kamakwe and you failed to provide Electricity for the Rural Communities. What really did you spend all the money on during your prosperity?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues have said much. I have only wet your appetite to take some moment of reflection and be sincere to the People we are representing and tell them what is right. I also want to thank the Honourable from Bombali *[the Lecturer]* because he did not only look at the Budget, but was also sincere to proffer some recommendations. These are the things we expect from you and not the unnecessary vuvuzela; you have to study the document, bring in your positive inputs and share your knowledge as to how we can all put energies together as a

Nation to grow. The unnecessary things you are talking about cannot help you; until you start saying the truth to the people and be sincere, you will not stop being in the Opposition, I thank you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Aruna Larkoh

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: Mr Speaker, my name is Aruna Papay Solomon Larkoh from Tonkolili District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this golden opportunity to thank the Finance Minister and his Team for putting this all-important National Document together.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to entreat everyone in this Well to pay attention to this document. For the last two days we have heard Debaters discussing this document, citing areas that are prominent while others are defending areas that we should lay premium on. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I see this as a way of undermining the relevance of this document and the people we are representing in this Well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I listened to my brothers from the other side, especially those from Kenema and Moyamba Districts I felt a bit baffled and disturbed, but later on I realised that their role in this Well is to defend the Government. But I also want to entreat them that when defending Government, I want them to be sincere and reference the suffering masses that they are representing. You can take the role to defend the Government because you are MPs on the ruling side. But I want you to know that defending the Government against the People that we are representing is a form of undermining the faith of the people out there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to implore the Members of the Ruling Government to be listening Members in this Well. We are not here to create confusion, we are not here to debate unnecessarily; we are here to debate constructively and to proffer solutions that will enhance the Socio-Economic Development of this nation. You

can only make a change if you listen, if you don't listen you are bound to fail and that is what we are seeing in this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Finance could agree with me that the people of this country are suffering. Let us reference the recent increase in Rice, Cement and Iron Rod. These are lifesaving commodities, how would you increase **5%** on Rice which is meant for our daily sustenance, and also increase **10%** on Cement and Iron Rod which we use to construct our houses? You can actually talk or defend the government, but as my brother from Bombali said yesterday, you can buy a bag of cement in Bombali at **Le 160,000** Old Leones but you cannot buy a bag of Cement in Pujehun and Bonthe at **Le 160,000** *[it may cost you more due to the distance]*. So it is your responsibility as Honourable Members from the other side to be objective and use nationalistic lens in this debate because it will reduce the suffering of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is our own responsibility to look at things that will help your people out there; we should not deliberate on issues that will undermine or increase the suffering of our people out there. Looking at the Budget, even though our Honourable Members from the other side termed it as a '*Kombra Budget*', I would tell them, this is a '*Killer Budget*', considering the content of it. Mr Speaker, we would come to cite some of the areas that if not looked into critically, will undermine the Government and the faith of our people out there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am only focusing on three items in this document *[Undertone]* I have not done it, I am just starting now. Mr Speaker, I want to zoom in my debate with a reference. With your leave Mr Speaker, permit me to read an extract.

THE SPEAKER: No, I will not, but I would remind you that you have barely two minutes.

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: I just started Mr Speaker, thank you very much. This is from Obama's speech in 2016 when he was talking about Budget, it reads...

THE SPEAKER: You started at 3:15pm...

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: It reads; *'the Budget is a roadmap to a future that embodies Americans values and aspirations; a future of opportunity and security for all of our families; a rising standard of living and sustainable peaceful planet for our kids- the future is within our reach'.*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with this Budget, the future of this country is within our reach in the next 24 months. We can handle it using objective minds; we do not need to use partisan minds in discussing issues that are related to national development, issues that have the tendency to undermine the lives of our people and put them in a situation that badly affect their lives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you go to Page 23, Paragraph 84 of this document, we have areas that talk about Youths Empowerment Programs. Honourable Members in this Well have debated and discussed a lot about Car Wash Project etc. But funnily under this document, you would realize that Car Wash Project is factored under Life Skilled Program. For God sake is Car Wash a Life Skilled Program? Is this the training that you want to give your kids out there, car wash? I am representing Tonkolili District, the youths of Tonkolili District will not be proud to be Car Wash Workers. Why can't you design innovate programs that will help the youths out there? For instance, we have a Training Centre we call Tech-Voc in Magburaka Town, Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, on that note.....

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: Mr Speaker, you look at that Training Centre in Magburaka, it has the capacity to create employment and training skills for over ten thousand youthful populations in this country but why are we neglecting that facility? Why are we not paying attention to such facilities, rather, we only focus on saying we are doing Car Wash Project for the youths.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member, on that note...

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: Mr Speaker, I am rounding up now...

THE SPEAKER: No,no,no

HON. ARUNA PAPAY LARKOH: On that note, I want to thank everyone here and especially the Speaker for giving me this opportunity. But I want to reiterate that the planned Project in Rokimbi is a fine project but the Budget allocated to the Ministry of Youth Affairs is ridiculous and cannot support what has been budgeted for those planned project in the Ministry of Youth Affairs, I thank you all for your attention
[Applause]

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to my last speaker for the day, the Honourable Margaret Johnson.

HON. MARGARET F. JOHNSON: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my names are Honourable Margaret Feimata Johnson from Kailahun District. I represent two Chiefdoms; Penguia and Peje Bongay.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for giving us a comprehensive detailed Budget. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard our colleagues from both sides; we have spoken and we have made our own contributions, but Mr Speaker, we need to give praises where praises are due.

Mr Speaker, I was opportune to be here during Ebola. I worked in the Ebola Hospitals, and I am sure some of us here were not even in the country because we were afraid of it, I worked there. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have seen some improvements in the Health Care Facilities for the last couple of years. I would highlight few of these achievements that we have seen.

Over the last couple of years we only had one Medical Store in Freetown but now we have another one in Bo, and there is also an on-going negotiation to have one in Makeni. This is done not for political reasons, but because we need it in our country
[Applause]

Also, we have had the HPV [vaccine] administered to our young women and children devoid of being APC or SLPP. The vaccine is meant to prevent our kids and we have seen it been provided across the country. We also have the Koindu Maternity Health Facility; school of excellence in full operation and everybody goes there.

Furthermore, through this government, the First Lady of this country has provided us a very good and equipped Health Facility with 300 beds at the 34 Military Hospital. If only we are honest to ourselves, we would all agree that that Hospital provides similar facilities as that of Choithram and it is very cost effective.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard some colleagues spoke about the poor health services and mortality rate. Before I go into that, they say charity begins at home, and for that reason, I would want to touch on our Health Facility here in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank the Minister for giving us the Financial Budget and a highlight of the quotation for health. But Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to observe that I have not seen where Parliamentary Health Facility is captured in this Budget. As Parliament, I want to draw your attention that we have one of the poorest health facilities in the country. I have said it before and I would say it again that the state of our health facility in this place is very appalling. For that reason Mr Speaker, I think the Minister needs to think about the Parliament Health Facility in the Budget allocated for health. Honourable Members, we are laughing but it is a serious matter; we need to think about our health facility in this place.

Mr Speaker, I would like to state that our child mortality rate has improved to some extent; we have seen a **2.6%** decline, and that is because we have had some improvement in our health facilities. It might not be perfect but we have made some improvement- let give that credit. I am sure I have spoken for everyone that His Excellency has put more effort into the Healthcare.

However, it must be made known that the Budget we have is not enough for us in terms of our health facilities. We need more because our population is growing and as a result we need to have more financial input into our health care system.

Also, for the first time in history we have a Mental Health Crisis Line which is good for all of us who may be subjected to having a breakdown or may probably be going through as we speak. So we thank His Excellency for giving us the opportunity to have more input in our health.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking about our roads, just like you Mr Speaker, my road was not mentioned in this Budget; the road from Penguia to Segbewema was not mentioned. The road from Penguya, the last border at the edge going to Guinea was not mentioned, and is a terrible road and we will need support for that. Mr Speaker, just as you lobbied to get your road done, please help me also lobby to address my road too.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all here travel each day on the highway, and according to the Road Traffic Data, the Road Traffic accidents is high; fatal road accidents so far is about 879.

My recommendation therefore is, whiles we are looking at the Emergency Service and the fund that is there, we need to be thinking about accident hubs on these high roads. We need to think about this because, if for example someone involves in a road accident from Freetown to Port Loko, that person may die by the time they get him or her to the nearest hospital. So we need to address that because of its possible impact on every one of us travelling on the high roads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me again come back to the issue of the health facility in Parliament. Mr Speaker, I hope the MDAs are here and they should be thinking about our health facility, particularly the Ministry of Health; we should have an Ambulance attached to the Parliament, and also provide effective medicines for our health facility.

THE SPEAKER: Just a moment.....

HON. MARGARET F. JOHNSON: Yes Sir

THE SPEAKER: If there is any representative of an MDA present, please take note that we would soon be doing a roll call before we adjourn. I am saying this because I noticed people leaving the Galleries. If you leave and your name is called and you are not present, you will be marked absent. Carry on please, and try to conclude.

HON. MARGARET F. JOHNSON: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to make one more recommendation, and this is for our Primary Health Education. We all know the high rate of teenage pregnancy in each of our Chiefdoms. We have teenage pregnancy as a pandemic and so we need to think about how to catch our girls young through sexual education in schools. As Members of Parliament, we also need to go to our Districts, Chiefdoms and communities and educate our young people about sex. On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this debate *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Lady for her contribution and I extend the same thanks to all Members of Parliament who have taken the Floor today to make a contribution to this debate. Madam Minister you may now take leave off us. May I ask the Acting Leader of Government Business to do the needful as far as the roll call is concern?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. The MDAs that are represented here today are:

No.	Name of representative	MDA	Comment
1.	Alie Kabbah	Guma Valley	gone
2.	Foday Kallon	Ministry of Finance	

3.	Ibrahim S. Jalloh	Ministry of Internal Affairs	
4.	Musa F. Marrah	SLIEPA	
5.	Micheal J. Attorney	Ministry of Environment	
6.	Cyrus Crispin Ngegba	Ministry of Youths	
7.	John Suma	Ministry of Mines	
8.	Rebecca M. Bonafa	Ministry of Planning	
9.	Derik Johnson	Ministry of Western Region	
10.	FelobIna F.M Marchaty	Ministry of Western Region	
11.	Samuel J Lawson	Works and Public Asset	
12.	Abu Moses Kamara	National Commission for Democracy	Are you around, Abu Moses Kamara?
13.	Harris J James	Ministry of Defence	
14.	Ilda B Paul	Local Government	
15.	Mohammed A Kamara	Mines And Mineral Resources	
16.	Dennis S Jumu	O N S	
17.	David W.S Banya	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Bayan is not here

18.	Mohamed P Jalloh	Ministry of Communication	
19.	Bashiru Cumba		
20.	Aiah E M'bawa	Foreign Affairs	
21.	Fayia M. Tucker		
22.	Prince A Soriba	A G's Office	
23.	Ibrahim Bah	Ministry of Sports	
24.	Kinni Lamin	Office of the Chief Minister	Gone
26.	Koroma Ibrahim	AG's Office	
27.	Mohamed Tarawally	EPA	
28.	Binneh K. Conteh	Small Arms	Gone
29.	Mabinty Bindi	Small Arms	
30.	Victoria Sandi	MCCI- Communications	
31.	Aminata Y. Sannoh	Basic Education	
32.	Abdulai Kantay	Civil Service Training College	
33.	N.S Ducool	Foreign Affairs	

34.	Altina Korosa	Foreign Affairs	
35.	Ilara Maddy	Finance	
36.	Paul Philip Morsay	Tourism and Culture	
37.	Michael Momoh Kargbo	Tertiary Education	
38.	Tejan Massaquoi	Pharmacy Board	
39.	V. R Gbetuwa	Ministry of Energy	
40.	Raymond S. Komba	MWRS	
41.	Mohamed Jalloh	Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources	
42.	Tamba Samu	M-PAPA	
43.	Mohamed I. Kurubu	Ministry of Health- Bonthe	
44.	Charles Kamanda	MTA	Absent
45.	Victoria Aiah Backarie	PWD	
46.	Momoh Conteh	M-PAPA	
47.	Gassimu Koroma	NIB	
48.	Patric M. Sama	Cabinet Secretariat	

49.	Miatta Kamara	Office of Vice President	Absent
50	Patrick Koroma	Office of the Vice President	Absent
51.	Kofi Esko Adai	NaCSSA	
52.	Aruna D Kamara	Ministry of Agriculture	
53.	Morison B. Gboyor	Ministry of...	Absent
54.	Charles Moinina	Ministry of Youth Affairs	
55.	Martin Jimmy	Cabinet Secretariat	
56.	Ahmed Manner	PMB	
57.	Lyoid A. Drage	NSRPA	
58.	David Kamara	NSRPA	
59.	Fatou N. Kanneh	NSRPA	
60.	Milton Godwin	Health	
61.	Abdul Karim Kamara	Labour	Absent
62.	Fuad M. Bangura	Labour	
63.	Samuel O.T Caulker	HRMO	

64	Ansumana A.M Lahai	HRMO	
65.	Lamin Manley	MMMR	
66.	Soko Kaisamba	NDMA	Absent

HON. BASHURE SILIKIE: Honourable Members, this list would be presented to the various Committees during the process of Committee on Supply, thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank you, Acting Leader of Government Business

ADJOURNMENT

The House stood down at 3:45pm and was adjourned to Friday 24th November, 2023 at 10am prompt.