



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION-FIRST MEETING

THURSDAY 23th MAY, 2013

SESSION – 2012/2013



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Of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Thursday, 23th May, 2013.

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FINANCE AGREEMENT RURAL FINANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME- PHASE II (RFCIP 2) BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT SIGNED IN ROME, ITALY AND FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE DATED 26TH APRIL, 2013.

(VII) GOVERNMENT MOTTION:

- (I) THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY 26TH MARCH, 2013.

FINANCE AGREEMENT SIGNED BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD) FOR THE EXECUTION OF THE REHABILITATION AND COMMUNITY- BASED POVERTY REDUCTION PROJECT (RCPRP) AMENDMENT TO THE RESTETED PROJECT FINANCING AGREEMENT DATED 12TH MARCH, 2013.

- (II) THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE RATIFY THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENT WHICH WAS LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON THURSDAY 18TH APRIL, 1013:

“LOAN AGREEMENT ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE MATOTOKA/SEFADU ROAD PROJECT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, DATED 20TH MARCH 2013.”



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 FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC

Thursday, 23th May, 2013.

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

I. PRAYERS

[The Clerk of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sesay, Read the Prayers].

[The Speaker, Hon. Justice Abel Nathaniel Bankole Stronge, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, with your leave I would like to make the following amendments on the Order Paper for today. The first amendment relates to Item II. Item II should be Correction of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 25th April, 2013. Mr Speaker I was also made to understand that because of the funeral arrangements, the Votes and Proceedings for the 9th May, 2013 was not presented. Therefore, that will have to be included for today. If that is the case, we have correction for Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 25th April, 2013 and 9th May, 2013 respectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second amendment has to do with Item IV on the Order Paper. It should be "Announcement of Member of the African Caribbean Pacific, European Union and Joint Parliamentary Assembly (ACP/EU/JPA).

THE SPEAKER: Excuse me Mr Leader, what is your amendment to the Parliamentary Union? It should not be there?

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA: It should not be African Parliamentary Union. It should be African Caribbean Pacific.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, do you recall I brought this matter up?

MR IBRAHIM S. SESAY (CLERK OF PARLIAMENT): Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: It should be African Caribbean Pacific (ACP).

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA: That is all for the Amendments Mr Speaker.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THURSDAY, 25TH APRIL, 2013

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we begin with Votes for Thursday, 25th April, 2013. We go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Can somebody move that the record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 25th April, 2013 be adopted as presented?

HON. ABU B. KOROMA: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

*Record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 25th April, 2013 was
unanimously adopted*

THE SPEAKER: We move next to the record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 9th May, 2013. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Can somebody move that the record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 9th May, 2013 be adopted as presented?

(Question Propose, Put and Agreed to)

*Record of Votes and Proceedings for Thursday, 9th May, 2013 was
unanimously adopted*

III. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, it is my sad duty to announce the passing away of two former illustrious Members of this Parliament. The first one is Honourable

Mohamed Samba Fofanah, who served in this Parliament from 1996 to 2006. He served as Majority Leader of this House. The second is the Honourable Ambassador Chief Sahr Matturi; former Member of Parliament who represented Kono District. In respect of these, I will ask the House to rise and observe a Minute of Silence prayer. May their souls rest in Peace *(A minute of silence prayer was observed for the departed souls)*.

Honourable Members, it is also my duty to announce three vacancies in this House. The first one occurred when Honourable Mathew Teambo resigned on his appointment as a Minister. The second is the resignation of the Honourable Alimamy Kamara on his appointment as a Minister, and the third is caused by the death of the Honourable Alice Mamie Tewoh Foyah, who died on the 26th April, 2013. The Chief Electoral Commissioner would be accordingly informed.

(IV) ANNOUNCEMENTS OF MEMBER OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (ACP/EU/JP ASSEMBLY)

THE MAJORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, in respect of the third vacancy just announced on the death of the Honourable Alice Mamie Foyah, who was a member of the ACP/EU Parliament, a replacement has been made in the person of Honourable Helen Kuyembah. I therefore announce that this vacancy is now going to be filled by Honourable Helen Kuyembah. Thank you Mr Speaker *(Applause)*.

V. PAPER LAID

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MR MOMODU KARGBO *(Deputy Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development):* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here this morning to lay a Paper entitled "*Financing Agreement, Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme Phase II (RFCIP 2), between the Republic of Sierra Leone*

and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, signed in Rome, Italy and Freetown, Sierra Leone, dated 26th April, 2013.”

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here this morning to ask this Honourable House to ratify the following Agreements:

Be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 26th March, 2013. Financing Agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development for the execution of the Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Programme (RCPRP) Amendment to the restated Project Finance Agreement, dated 12th March, 2013; and

this Honourable House ratify the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 18th April, 2013, Loan Agreement on the Reconstruction of the Matotoka/Sefadu Road Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait fund for Arab Economic Development, dated 20th March, 2013.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for procedural purposes, I want to go through the two Papers and then the House can go through them together.

THE SPEAKER: You are at liberty to do so Mr Minister.

MR MOMODU KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry of Agriculture has been financing and implementing a project called "*Rehabilitation and Community Based Poverty Reduction Programme.*" It started back in 2004 and it is one of the acclaimed projects in terms of success in the Sub-region, even in Central Africa. It is ranked among the Projects funded by the World Bank as those that show records of performance. Because of that, IFAD has kept a close look on this Project and

throughout the period they have been providing additional amount of money, both in Loans and Grants. This is the third infusion into this Grant and this amount is about \$4,215, 000 that is a loan. Another Special Drawing Rights of \$4,215,000 is a Grant. Both sum up to \$13,000,000.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this funding will follow similar component as the previous Projects that has been approved in this House. They are going to focus their attention on the small holder agricultural scheme, which is gaining ground across the country. A lot of work has been done. As I stand here, the record shows that a total of 589 feeder roads have been rehabilitated in Kono, Kailahun, Kenema and Koinadugu. In this particular additional funding, a total of 97 kilometers will be added to the proposition. Also, Road Maintenance Equipment have been provided in Koinadugu and Kenema to the City Councils to help them establish small Ward Maintenance Units.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in this country, most of the time you hear about shifting cultivation, a process whereby a farmer farms one area and then moves the following year another area. That kind of agriculture is expensive and is responsible for the extensive destruction of our forests. So, the new thinking is to bring farmers into the swamps. In the swamp farming, you can engage what is known as sedentary agriculture. In one farm, you can grow three or four crops in one season. In this category, a total of 1,700 hectares have been rehabilitated and a similar proposition is proposed for this amount.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the three crop farming is gaining grounds. Sierra Leone was once known for quality coffee and cacao. We all know what happened. We don't want to go back to the sad story. But that is the fact. We had a war in which most of the farms and plantations become bushy and is now taking a lot of money to rehabilitate them. Attempts are being made to expand the acreage. Grown-up gardens are being built, village nurseries are being established etc. There is a new proposition like solar dryers. This is because in these villages, there are isolated communities. To bring electricity in those areas is difficult. Therefore, the new proposition is to use solar

dryers because we have so much sun in this country. A key operational area for this activity is in Daru, in the Kailahun District where 100 acres of oil palm is proposed. That is Component 1.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second component is to support the Community Development and Local Government. For a long time there was a lot of centralisation wherein everything was done in Freetown, which was not good for the country. Therefore, the Local Councils have been established. Their activities must be strengthened Mr Speaker. Some of these monies are going to strengthen donor coordination. A lot of the funding that goes to these Councils is provided by International Agencies. And if they are not coordinated, they could be working at cross purpose. The council's staff are going to be trained in Record Management. Those of us that work in Government on a daily basis know the frustration of 'I want this File or this letter,' if you don't see it, there the problem starts. I think all of you must have gone through that experience. Mr Speaker, you wanted to attend a meeting and you discovered that you have not seen your file. It is very painful Mr Speaker. So, it has been identified as a serious issue in Government, not only at the central Government level, but even with at the Local Government level. So, the money is going to be put into that activity. Some money is also needed to monitor the work that will be going on. As always with this Project, they have to be managed properly. And if you want good management, you have to spend money. In essence Mr Speaker, what I am saying is that, this Project consists of three components. There is a component that will support the small holder scheme, and it is an on-going programme. I think as we all go around, we see ABC's being established all over the country. We hear about Farmer Skills Schools being established. This is an attempt to rigorously engage the farmers Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second component is Community Development and Local Government. These are the new babies of this Project. We need to strengthen them because we know that centralisation does not take us anywhere. The

action is at the village, Chiefdom and district levels. Therefore, we need to take development to that stage so that it could trickle down.

Finally Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is also the component of Project Management. In particular, there is the issue of Monitoring and Evaluation. These are the people who tell us that we are doing well with the money that is being provided. Whether the job is being done properly or whether the job is not being done properly, they do the evaluation. That is the presentation for the Rehabilitation Project. As I said, it is an amount of Special Drawing Rights of \$8 million, comprised of Loan of \$4.215 million and a Grant of \$4.215 million. When you add the two, you would get \$13 million.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second presentation is a Loan which we are asking the House to ratify. I would like with your permission to take this House a little back into History. Mr Speaker, the composition of this Honourable House has changed...
- *(Interruption)*.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister?

MR MINISTER: Yes Sir.

THE SPEAKER: I believe the gentleman who walks up and down is your Personal Assistant, attending to you. Next time he should come to this House properly dressed.

MR MOMODU KARGBO: Noted Sir! Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the reason why I want to take the House a little bit into History is because this Project is a continuous Project. It is a Phase II of a three-part Project. It was on Tuesday, 29th May, 2012, almost a year ago when I asked this Honourable House to ratify the first part of the Agreement for the Matotoka/Sefadu Road. What I presented to this House covered from Matotoka to Yeiyi. On the presentation of that proposal, I received a lot of not too much complementary reactions because it seemed we may have let down the proposition which people had that the road was going to be constructed from Matotoka to Sefadu, and that, the construction was going to start from Sefadu through Matotoka.

The Gallery was full by then. We had a very full Gallery on that day and it was not an easy time. Mr Speaker, even when I told them to understand that this is just the first part of the money that we have, they did not listen to me. I also told them that we have identified a potential financier for the second part of the Project, it was difficult.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the reason why I am going back into history on this matter is simple. You have various development strategies to upgrade our country. Our Country is resource-starved. We do not get all that we wanted at one-go. We have to devise strategies for us to be able to do our work and meet the ever rising aspirations of our people. The truth really is that, if we put politics aside, we will achieve the people's dreams. If we put electioneering aside, some slogans are usually very apt and they do apply in this particular case. The phrase, 'action pass intention' was not an ordinary slogan Mr Speaker. It is in this particular Project that I am now presenting to this House for you to see the meaning. Although it was found in politics, it is a real development strategy. When you don't have money and you are managing your resources, you can't wait until you have everything before you start. You take calculated risk and try it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the Matotoka/Sefadu Road, the funding is complete (*Applause*). For the first 70 kilometres which I presented on the 29th May, 2012, one is being funded by the OPEC Fund and the ADB. That will take us from Matotoka to Yeiyi. Now, from Yeiyi to Sefadu, that is the money that we now have and that is the money I am talking to you about. We have procured certain amount of money from the Kuwait Fund. And the total cost of the Project from Yeiyi to Sefadu is \$25 million. It is about fifty Kilometres. Kuwait is providing \$14 million of that amount. And that is what I am asking this House to ratify. A balance of \$11 million will be provided by the Sierra Leone Government (*Applause across the Floor*). It is our country and it is our business as citizens to develop this country. We have to make the necessary sacrifices for this country to progress. That is why we have said that once we have the \$14 million; it is more than half of the amount that is required. As a Government, supported by this Parliament, we will find the balance amount to do the

rest of the job (*Applause*). If everything goes on well, by the end of 2015, we should be riding on a paved road from Matotoka to Sefadu (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the total amount of \$14 million is a loan. And it carries a net interest rate of two percent (2%) with a grace period of four years. It has a forty installment payments. In other words, it is a loan that covers a period of twenty years. We are not only going to construct the road from Yeyi to Sefadu, but some of the roads inside the area like Koidu/Sembehun City. It is up to 10 Kilometres roads within the vicinity that would be constructed and brought up to grade 'A' level. All the headquarter towns roads have begun to develop. For example, Bo, Kenema, Port Loko, and Makeni are all under construction. When the roads have been made, they will be fitted with lights.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in this road construction, we as Sierra Leoneans should be able to have the capacity to design our own roads. We have to conceptualise, design and maybe begin to construct these roads. That is a long term objective. Therefore, as part of this training, these are the usual things. At least, two Engineers from the Sierra Leone Road Authority (SLRA) will be put through sophisticated training as a way of knowledge transfer. This would enable us get engineers from companies run by Sierra Leoneans. I have to admit here that I envy C. S. E. Sometimes I ask myself, why are the Senegalese constructing our own roads? I ask myself this question all the time. We want to lay the foundation wherein we get engineers from Sierra Leone. That is the presentation I have for the Matotoka Road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I therefore move that:

(a) "this Honourable House ratify the Financing Agreement signed between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the execution of the Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Programme (RCPRP)

Amendment to the restated Project Finance Agreement, dated 12th March, 2013; and

(b) the Loan Agreement on the Reconstruction of the Matotoka/Sefadu Road Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, dated 20th March, 2013.” I thank you.

(Question Proposed)

HON. KOMBA E. KOEDYOYOMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at this moment, my heart is full with joy *(Applause)*. This is because when the first segment for the reconstruction of this road was laid before this Parliament, the area referred to as Yeiyi is not an area known to many of us the stakeholders in Kono. And we were getting a bit worried as where this Yeiyi is. I think the cry of the Kono people was listened to very keenly by the Government. I am very happy to note that we have now received positive response to our cry in that direction. I would want to thank the Government, through the Minister of State, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for helping us by getting this loan from Kuwait. We cried because that road serves as an important route, not only for economic activities, but for the movement of people in the whole country. That road is the main link to the Kono District. The subsidiary link we have will be properly maintained between Kenema District, through Tongo to Jaima, Nimilkoro. So, we are happy it is not anything that we need to debate for too long *(Applause)*. This is one of the happiest moments for the Kono people. For far too long, stories have been around about the implementation process. A lot has been said about that road Mr Speaker. A lot of information has been disseminated to our people. And for the past five years of this Government, this is a good news we are hearing. People have been saying that the road construction will start tomorrow. Some are saying that the road construction will start from both axis, from Koidu to Matotoka and meet somewhere at Yeiyi. Mercifully, that situation has now been resolved to say that it is a continuous

process, beginning from Matotoka and terminates at Sefadu. Our people will be happy to hear this good news.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my only worry is that, we could have given more publicity to this great information if this House had let us know before now. We would have let our people come down from Kono to grace this occasion. I think the launching would have added more weight to the importance that is given to the debates in this House. This is because until this House gives its approval to any Agreement, that Agreement is null and void. What we are doing here today is a welcome news for our people in Kono. We only hope that bureaucratic processes will not delay the implementation of the start of this programme. The rains are around the corner. As it has always been in the past, the roads have been cut-off. Vehicles could not ply to Kono because of the terrible nature of the road. Initially, we say thanks to the SLRA for taking very proactive steps in repairing the roads during the dry season. But the rains are coming very fast and heavy. We hope that the signing process with the Contractors will start soon, so that it will not be delayed. I want the Contractors to continue the work. That will add to our joy that Kono still belongs to the rest of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I want to say thanks again to the Minister for bringing this important Agreement before this House. And I want to thank the Government for coming up with that colossal sum of money. It is \$11 million. Of course, we will pay the price. This is because the money which is going to repair that road is coming in a form of a Loan. It is not a Grant at all. Therefore, our future children must prepare to pay the Loan.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to the Order Paper which has been laid on the Table of Parliament, the Agreement is between the Government of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Honestly, I am one of the recipients of this Programme. I am saying this because among the thirteen districts in the country, Kono seems to benefit again from this Area. It is a good programme because it aimed at the development of rural areas. The Constituency I represent in this

Parliament consists largely of the poorest people of this nation. We have been receiving some assistance in raising the level of wealth amongst our people. As I speak, IFAD is in the process of constructing water-wells in that part of the country. I would seem to disagree with the Minister that feeder roads have been constructed. They are now beginning the construction of feeder roads in my own area; Constituency 027 in the Kono District, covering five Chiefdoms has just begun Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for your benefit, I will name the Chiefdoms and those of you who want to look at the map of Sierra Leone, particularly those that covering these areas. I am going to name them for you and you will see the constraints we have. The Chiefdoms are: Fiama, Gane Kandor, Mofindor, Lei and Toli. These are Chiefdoms which lie very close to the borders with Guinea. They are very mountainous and not easy to access. The Honourable Lahai Marah from the Koinadugu will testify to this. His Constituency lies adjacent to mine. We share borders and he knows the constraints he too goes through to access some parts of his Constituency. Like I was saying, we are benefitting now from the IFAD Programme. We have two road net-works which have just started and I will only appeal to the people in the Ministry of Agriculture to fast track the process. It is very slow. The cement which is meant to reconstruct the bridges is even used for other purposes. I would want them, since they are implementing this Programme to carefully monitor the cement they are using. It is not going to the work site at all. They normally take this cements somewhere else Mr Speaker. I would have loved the people in the Ministry of Agriculture to be monitoring these materials. The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is doing wonderfully well for securing these Agreements. But the very people who will be implementing the Project need to be here so that they hear the people's representatives on what they have to say with regards to the implementation of those programmes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having said that, these are very beautiful programmes for the development of this country. This programme is aimed at reducing rural poverty and ensuring household food insecurity on a sustainable basis. I think, as I speak now the harvest for last year was very poor in my area and the people are

suffering from food insecurity. I do hope and trust that this Programme, which we are now about to approve will help to alleviate the sufferings of our people so that they will be able to reduce their poverty level.

On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for bringing this Programme to our people. Thank you.

HON. DR FODAY I. SUMAH: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like the previous Honourable Member of Parliament has said, my heart is also full of joy. I will start by saying that any investment in the Agriculture is investment in the right place if we are to move this country to prosperity. It is not strange to anybody in this House that the agricultural sector is one of the most important sectors in this country. Mr Speaker, over 75% of our people is directly or indirectly engaged in the agricultural activities for their daily survival. They depend on Agriculture for the payment of their children's school fees. Our people are mostly small holder farmers, depending on very rudimentary tools with very low productivity. I firmly believe that such projects will transform that aspect of productivity, not only for poverty reduction. My new vocabulary now is 'world creation' instead of poverty reduction. There is a difference between the two terms. Not surprisingly because of those rudimentary tools and the very low productivity, farmers in this country are among the poorest. Studies have indicated that Mr Speaker. I will want to start with the historical development of the countries we now call developed countries. Before a country could embark on development, there is need for food production to increase and to be self sufficient. This is how the rural sector will develop. The rural cottage industries will develop and it is on the basis of that development that labour would be released from the rural sector into the city. That should normally be the process or the part of the organisation. What do we see in the country like ours? We are seeing a mass of labourers. There are young men and women leaving agriculture and rural areas into the city with all the consequences, including a vast increase in the demand for food and the consequences of rising prices.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think if we enlarge and extend swamp production, agricultural productivity will increase and the rate at which the bushes and forests are being depleted will be reduced. We now know that our economy is the fastest growing economy in Africa. Or, it is among the very fastest growing in Africa. How would that growth be translated into development? That growth will be translated through the participation of the rural communities. Agriculture should be benefiting from this fast growth based mainly on extracting industries. This is why when Agriculture is targeted as it is in this programme, it is a joy to people like us and all Sierra Leoneans. There is a gradual shift in the policy as to how we develop agriculture in this country. The move to increase efforts to promote small holder agriculture is a welcoming gesture. But also, tree crop farming is becoming a very important priority of the Ministry of Agriculture. We have the traditional tree crops like cocoa and coffee. But emphases are being laid on others like cashew, Moringa and others. There are other countries that are benefitting today from cashew plantation. Efforts are to be made on cashew production in this country. This is because there are enormous advantages in cashew production. There are various fruits and other products to be derived from cashew. I would not name all of them now. That is a very laudable shift in policy from giving some seedlings to farmers that are never repaid, even though they are given on credit bases. So, it is good that the Ministry of Agriculture is gradually shifting away from that traditional support to farmers to a more imaginative form of policy that will benefit this sector. A very important aspect here is that, it deals with Local Councils. Anybody who has come closer to Local Councils will know the challenges involved in decentralisation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the aspects of Monitoring and Evaluation are very important. They would allow those implementing projects or policies to correct things that have gone wrong as the project implementation is going on, rather than waiting until after years and then come to evaluate. Only this will ensure that results will be clear, and that we have not achieved certain goals. The aspect of emphasising monitoring and evaluation should be encouraged. But it should not be like the traditional pattern of monitoring and evaluation. I will plead here for two things. In the

first place, improving or building the capacity of District Councils and even farmers to come up with their own monitoring and evaluation in a participatory way. We do not simply take experts from abroad and from Freetown to go and monitor and evaluate projects. A participatory method of monitoring and evaluation will be a better way to organise District Councils in order to arrive at the goals of this project. There are ways to do that Mr Speaker. It is important that I make this statement for the benefit of the Minister, especially the Minister of Agriculture that we should shift from the traditional pattern of monitoring and evaluation and encourage a more participatory aspect of monitoring and evaluation. The importance of this is that, the people to be involved are the farmers and the District Councils' staff. When Outsiders come and do the work for them, two things happen Mr Speaker. First, there is resentment. This is because either the experts coming from outside are not welcome, or they do not receive all the documents they need. The second thing is that, people hands off what they should be doing. If we want to take care of our own process of development, we should start from that point. Now, if food production does not increase, agricultural sector is not developed. We will be having a skewed form of economic development, in the sense that we will be having this fantastic growth rate in the texts. The analysis will be fantastic, but when you come to the ground, the community is not sharing in this whole process. This is why this Project, in improving governance at community level and community development is very important. I will also make a plea here that in capacitating the District Councils, one should also go a step lower, especially the Ward Committees, and Village Development Committees. They should be benefitting from whatever activities this Project would be funding.

With that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do appeal and I believe there would be no resistance for the approval of this Project. I thank you.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. BRAIMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to lend my voice to the happiness expressed by Honourable Komba E. Koedoyoma and the Honourable who has just spoken. I say so from an informed position that the International Fund for Agricultural Development, which is managing two projects in this

country, the Rehabilitation and Community-Based Poverty-Reduction Project and the Rural Finance and Community Improvement Projects are being implemented by IFAD. The attainment of the level of the management of this Project has been the work of very serious minded people who have worked assiduously to get the projects on track. As the Minister said, the institutional framework of the IFAD Projects which actually reached the climax in 2004 saw the start of its implementation in 2007. Unlike other previous Agricultural Projects where the time frame for implementation will not even end and you will hear that the Donors have left. But instead of Donors leaving for the two Agricultural Projects for IFAD, we hear the Donors are providing what we call 'top-ups.' These are all 'top ups' on what is being implemented. So, it is a very good Agricultural Project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Rehabilitation and Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP) as the Minister said is focusing on three major components. He spoke about the feeder roads. I will take a different position from Honourable Komba E. Koedoyoma. This is a very serious Project. It started with the rehabilitation of feeder-roads, after a couple of years, the Project Managers were told that they cannot continue to rehabilitate feeder roads if they cannot put a structure in place to maintain those feeder roads. I have worked in Kono District in terms of helping the community development aspect of this Project. We have rehabilitated several roads in Koidu, but just after one or two rainy seasons, you would see the roads back to their usual state. So, what this Project has done like the Minister said, they have created their Wards within the Councils by providing motor graders and other equipment so that the Councils will take the maintenance of these feeder roads. And that can make the feeder roads management sustainable. For some of us who are old enough to look at how the Councils were operating, we had the PWD in this country where you have at least a minimum of four workers along the roads. There you would have the cutlasses and the shovel hangers. They were visible at every corner. They stayed by the road with their families to see that the pot holes are being filled. This idea also came out from the Civil Engineers who are now all over the country. I know Honourable Koedoyoma must have

seen few roads constructed and rehabilitated but the maintenance culture was not there and now Kono District is taking charge. So, it is a very good Project Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Koedoyoma also spoke on the aspect of irrigation. In that Project, we have a culture in this country where people go to their farms and swamps to cultivate for just three months and you sit down for the whole year. What this Irrigation Project is doing from IFAD is not only bringing farmers to the swamps, but it is also encouraging them to engage in what we call multiple cropping. This is a process where you do not only produce many crops at the same time, but you will also produce at three different periods within the year. This is what irrigation is doing and that is what IFAD is encouraging us to do. The aspect of this irrigation cannot be looked at the superficial level. You can also look at it for what it is doing on the ground. We have got a crisis with our youths. These irrigation components by the rural engineers are training youths within their Communities to be able to actually reconstruct and design swamps, so that the irrigation process will continue. By the time the rural engineers leave the communities, the youths will be able to take charge of constructing the peripheral bonds and other bonds within the swamps so that they will take over that sector. So, the irrigation engineers are leaving this kind of virtue. It is giving this kind of good work to our youths whom we are always blaming. This is another way of getting them very busy within the communities and also to be engaged in Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other aspect my colleague from the other side was talking about is decentralisation process. When the IFAD Project came, there was decentralisation process of which I was the head of that component. He was suggesting that the capacity building be brought lower to the Councils down to the Ward Committees. I want to inform you that capacity of the Ward Committees has been developed in such a way that the Ward Committees have the capacity to monitor projects that are implemented within their Wards. The Pilot Project for IFAD only covers Kono, Kailahun, Koinadugu and Kenema districts. Because of the success of this Project, especially the Rural Finance and Community Improvement Project, another funding has

been provided for the other districts within the country, especially in the establishment of the Financial Services Association and Community Banks such as the establishment of the Apex Bank. They are now moving out to service other districts. What it is doing in the four districts I have named is that, they are also training the Ward Committees. If you go in any Ward Committee, the Ward Committee members are not even able to tell you what their responsibilities in decentralisation are. This Project is also covering that area.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister was telling us about the process of delivery. Some District Councils have not got the capacity to reproduce copies of notes they gathered. The project is providing that equipment and it is also building their capacities to be able to deliver services within their districts. Therefore, this project is very viable for our people. It is viable because of the strategy of implementations put in place for the execution of whatever activities they have. The first one is supervision. Supervisions in other Agricultural Projects have been lacking. But here, you do not work in IFAD for complete ninety days and will not have an International Mission. This International Mission will tour every area of Implementation. They will come with their experts and other representatives from their project areas in the sub-region. They will all converge here to see how the Projects are being implemented, to evaluate even the competence of the officers who are on the ground implementing the project. They will also interact with the beneficiaries to know what their challenges are and also their aspirations towards agricultural development. So, supervision is very effective. This is what I wanted to really emphasise here. If a Project of any sort is going to achieve the level at which IFAD has gone, there must be effective monitoring and supervision. It cannot be the monitoring where you go and meet Project Officers and they give you a few hundred thousand Leones and you run to come to Freetown and say, I am evaluating. Those guys are doing perfectly well. It is going to be a genuine supervision like what others are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Honourable Koedoyoma was also talking about Monitoring and Evaluation. At every level of implementation of this Project, there must

be Monitoring and Evaluation. The Ward Committees should be trained to monitor these Projects. The reports of Monitoring and Evaluation start from the beneficiaries to the Officer and to the Project Coordinator. This will ensure effectiveness in the work. The reason why I am saying this is because we have to be very serious about supervision and how we implement our projects. I am an effective Manager that is why I am saying this. You need to supervise in whatever thing you are doing. Most of the Projects are not being supervised. This is why Donors are withdrawing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to lend my voice to the Yei/Sefadu Road. My concern here is that I had stayed in Kono for over three years and the two last years I had a meeting with the African Development Bank and the other representatives from other Donors and the Minister. We gathered in Kono in the Satta Amara Hall about three years ago. They even assured us that by January, 2010, the reconstruction of that road was going to start. I am a little perturbed when I realised that the Minister has not even started the reconstruction of the first section of the road. We are now talking about ratifying this loan for the other section. My point is that, I want to encourage you like what my colleague did say to take this work serious. We know all the bureaucratic tendencies you have. Please work on them very seriously and honestly to ensure effectiveness. If Road 'A' has not started, Road 'B' cannot easily start. I am encouraging the Minister to work with the Donors. Make sure you fast track the reconstruction of the first part so that you will encourage some of us to even talk about the second one, which is the Yei to Sefadu Road. We have had it long and let the time be short. Thank you very much Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

HON. P.C. SHEKU A. T. FASULUKU SONSIAMA III: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here this morning to thank the Government for this Project. This Project is going to restore the hopes of the Kono people (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it will interest you to know that the Kono/Matotoka Road is about 120 kilometres, covering two districts, Tonkolili and Kono Districts. Three Chiefdoms in Tonkolili District and three Chiefdoms in Kono District are going to benefit

from this Project. For some strange reason, our constituents in Kono District always blame the authorities in Kono for the deplorable state of the Kono/Matotoka Road. For me, it is my first achievement as a Member of Parliament to participate in the ratification of this Loan Agreement for the second phase of this road. I am not an engineer by profession, but I can say here that the soil texture that has been used to maintain or repair the road during the dry season has caused immense struggle for pedestrians around the months of July/August. This is because the water retention capability of that particular soil is very high and I believe it will be muddy in the next two to three months. If that is so, I will like to thank the Government for restoring the hopes of the Kono people. I want to join the few Honourable Members who have recommended to this House for the ratification of this Loan. I want us all to please talk to the Minister to fast track the procurement process for this first phase of this Loan. From what the Minister of Finance has just said to this Honourable House, a particular Loan or Grant Agreement has been ratified by this Honourable House nearly one year ago. To the best of my knowledge, nothing has happened as far as the Matotoka/Yei Road is concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Matotoka/Yei Road is about 70 kilometres. And according to the Minister of Finance, this particular Loan Agreement we are discussing this morning is going to be the Second Phase of the road from Yei to Koidu Town or Sefadu, which is about 50 kilometers. From the face, the total cost of that road, I think it is not mistake to say that that road is going consume a lot of money. Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) per kilometer is a lot of money. We must be thankful. The Kono people must be very grateful and thankful to President Koroma and his Government. I am being told that that road was last paved some forty-two years ago. It is only now that we are thinking of reconstructing this road again. Some of us used to go through Kenema and Tongo Field to go to Koidu. This was because the road was un-navigable. If you are not stopped, somebody will stop you. If that person is not moved out of the mud, you cannot make up your way.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring this Honourable House to a very important issue that has received little attention. That is, the Axle Load of those roads that have been constructed presently. The Government is spending a lot of money together with the Donors. And we are talking here about an economic boom. Are our Road Authorities paying attention to the Axle Load? These roads are being constructed for what? This is something I wanted to ask the Minister and also encourage SLRA or the Road Transport Authority (RTA) that it is high time we paid attention to the Axle Load specifications for which our roads are being constructed in this country. Otherwise, I believe the total life-span these roads are being constructed for will begin to deteriorate before their actual times. I am saying this because when people bring vehicles in this country that are forty tons maximum capacity, they want to reinforce them to take fifty to sixty tons. Most of our roads are not constructed to accommodate that type of Axle Load. I think the Government can even make money if we put Weigh Stations and begin to tax people heavily (*Applause*). We should begin to tax those that are putting extra loads on our roads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am so happy and I think I am a proud parliamentarian on behalf of Kono District to tell my colleagues that Government is also putting no less than \$11 million on the Phase Two of the Project. I do not know how much Government is going to put for the Phase One. Maybe that is going to be my assignment when I go back to my Constituency. I will mobilise my constituents to come here to say thank you to Mr President and his Government. Thank you very much (*Applause*).

HON. FREDERICK S. SOURIE: I thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity to make my contribution on this important Agreement. I am going to limit my contribution on the Loan Agreement. That is, the construction of the Matotoka/Sefadu Road Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait Fund. Mr Speaker, when I was giving my maiden speech, I commented on that road and today, we are here to ratify a loan that would be used for the construction of that same road. But since it is a debate, I will try to convince this Honourable House to speedily ratify this

Loan. I will do it from three angles. I will take the economic angle and I will argue as if I am SLPP and I will also argue as if I am APC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk on the economic aspect of this Agreement so that we start to understand the amount of savings we will get if we tar this road. Mr Speaker, when you contract these transport companies to take forty feet container from Freetown to Makeni, it costs about Le8 million. I know those figures because I am a Procurement Practitioner. I have dealt with such issues before. Mr Speaker, the high way from Freetown to Makeni is about 114 miles. And the distance from Makeni to Kono is about 98 miles. We pay Le15 million to take the same forty feet container from Makeni to Kono. If you go by the mathematics, we do what is called 'direct proportion'. If that road is tarred, we will be paying approximately Le7 million from Makeni to Kono. We are presently paying Le15 million. This means that there is an excess of Le8 million. Why this huge amount because the road is not good.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take the average of 40 ft. container that enters Koidu Town per week is about four. This means that every week we are spending Le32 million per week. And if you multiply this by the number of weeks per year, you will agree with me that the reconstruction of that road is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at the social aspect of this Agreement. I will look at the sufferings our brothers and sisters have gone through. Mr Speaker, the transportation fare from Freetown to Makeni is Le17, 000. Smaller cars cost Le25, 000 from Freetown to Makeni. This is what our constituents are paying due to the deplorable state of the road. If that road is paved, the people are expected to pay something like Le14, 000 per person. If that happens, our people would be able to save something like Le11, 000. The average traffic in that place, from Makeni to Kono is about ten vehicles. That is the least because I have been plying the route when I was not a Member of Parliament. So, I know exactly what happens there. Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that the capacity of most of these vehicles is about 18 people. Therefore, we will be saving $Le11, 000 \times 180$. And if you multiply $11,000 \times 180 \times 365$

days per year, Mr Speaker you are talking about very close to a billion Leones savings. If you multiply that billion Leones by forty, assuming everything remain constant, the savings is more than the cost Mr Speaker. And for that simple reason, the financial burden of our people will be reduced. I therefore call on this Honourable House to speedily ratify this Agreement (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take the SLPP angle. Mr Speaker, Koidu New Sembehun City as we know it today was known as Koidu Town. It was during the SLPP reign that this Town was renamed or they transformed into a city with series of promises that they were going to reconstruct the road leading to the city. Because of the war and some other good reasons it was not done. Today, we have before us the Second Phase of the road. It would make them proud Mr Speaker if this road leading to the city is reconstructed. Therefore, this town they renamed as a city is the only city that is still connected without tarred roads. That road is going to be reconstructed. They should see themselves as proud supporters of this Loan Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from the APC perspective, they would boast that they did that road in the past and it is going to be an APC-led Government that will pave this road again. We told our people that all we need to do is to do something that will lure the APC Government to reconstruct our road. What did the people do? They gave the APC six parliamentary seats so that the APC-led Government would work (*Applause*). We have given the APC the bait. I am therefore imploring this Honourable House to ratify this Agreement. I cannot stop without allaying the fears of the two Honourable Members from Kono who expressed doubt about this Agreement. What the Honourable Paramount Chief said about the soil is true. But that is why our President, when he was in Kono District promised us that the road from Matotoka to Kono will not deteriorate as it was during 2012. And Mr Speaker because he said so, it is happening as we speak. That is why we have SALCOST. Their Graders and their engineers have been on that road working relentlessly. If you are a regular traveler on that road, you will see their engineers going up and down to identify spots that are damaged and

deteriorated. They are there Mr Speaker. I can guarantee this House that this road will not deteriorate as it was in 2012. That one is a guarantee I can promise this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as for the bureaucratic nature expressed by Honourable Komba Koedoyoma, I want him to doubt us anymore. The bait has caught the fish and the fish is now in our net. If there is going to be any delay, I will blame the Honourable Members from Kono District. I will not blame the Government at all. For your information, very soon we are going to see the signing of the Contract for the First Phase. I will not give you a precise date for now, but you will know the date very soon. I want to inform this House that something is being done and today, we must be grateful to the Government for the signing of this Agreement. I am happy that some Members of Parliament on the other side of this House have acknowledged this. They have thanked the President for this gesture. They deliberately refused to thank the President when we were debating the Presidential Address. I want to say bravo to them for coming out conspicuously to say thank you Mr President. For those three reasons, I therefore call on all Members of Parliament here present to speedily ratify the Loan Agreement on the Reconstruction of the Matotoka/Sefadu Road Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait Fund for the Arab Economic Development, dated 30th March, 2013. I thank you Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI (*Minority Leader of the House*): Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a privilege for me to add my voice to the two Agreements before us this morning. One is on Road Construction and the other on Agriculture. These two sectors are symbiotic in nature. This means that a country's agricultural developments and advancements depend on its infrastructural development. This is so because moving agricultural produce and labourers from the supply source to the farms or the villages and also moving agricultural produce from the farms to the consumers you need accessible roads. On the other hand, with good roads, you can also expedite agricultural development and modernisation. The two Agreements we have before us here are Agreements that should not be politicised at all. Roads, Agriculture, Food, Education, and Health should not be politicised, irrespective of where you belong in this

Parliament. I say so because whether you are in opposition or in governance, our constituents need these developments. When we were campaigning, these were the things that we put in our respective Manifestos. We will say we will improve on Agriculture, road networks, Education and so on. This is because wherever you find yourselves, your people need to be developed. It does not matter who does it. At the end of the day, it is for the people of Sierra Leone (*Applause*). These are the basic necessities of life. These are the engine of growth. And that is why we on this side have always been supporting any development in that comes to our people. This is because some of these developments are not starting overnight. The foundations have been laid many years ago. I believe that is why America is developed today. America is developed today because the foundations have been laid. Any Government that comes will just work on those foundations and continue to progress.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Kono District Road leads from the North to the Eastern Province and we know that agriculturally, Kono District is very pivotal in the development of Sierra Leone. We have our Mining Industries located in that District. But in addition to that, if I am not mistaking, only three Chiefdoms in Kono District are associated with diamond mining activities. The rest are agriculturally based Chiefdoms. Therefore, this road, even though it will stop in Sefadu, it will serve as an influencing factor for the other Chiefdoms to increase on their agricultural production. This is because once their produce get to Sefadu, the produce can quickly get down to Freetown for consumption or for export. In the case of our minerals, of course when once these produce get to Freetown, they will be exported and they will provide the needed foreign exchange that we need and will also provide other basic services.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before now, the Matotoka/Kono Road had two main outlets. From Kenema, you will go through Bunumbu to Gandohun and then to Kono. From Kenema also, you will go to Mano Junction, Tongo Field and then to Kono. If this road is constructed, it will serve its life span. But we must also pay attention to the other roads that also lead to Kono, particularly the Tongo Field Road. I am saying this because Tongo Field with Koidu Holdings or Octave Mining is contributing tremendously

to royalties as a result of mining activities in that area. Yet, it is only as a result of their Corporate Social Responsibility that the road from Mano Junction to Kono is passable. We will implore the Government that as they consider Kono/Matotoka Road, we must also consider Mano Junction/Tongo Field to Kono so that people can have choices depending on where they are to access Kono. This is very important Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the IFAD Project is a welcome gesture. As I said, as an Agricultural Economist, we need this Project to continue to address the needs of our farmers. Majority of them are still small scale resource farmers. We know that our lead to development would have to be through Agricultural Industrialisation. Whilst we are improving upon production, we must also pay attention to value. Through value addition, we create jobs and byproducts that people of this country will need. By creating jobs, we are also creating income, especially for our youths who constitute majority of our population. Mr Speaker because of unemployment our youths are very unstable and irritated. This is not good for the stability of our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without going into the specificity of this Projects, I say that Transport and Agriculture are two sectors for a country like ours to develop. The two sectors are very important for the development of any country. And that is why we are very happy that these two Projects have come to Parliament for our consideration. We give the two Projects our supports and our blessings. And as a Parliament, we will call on the Committee on Agriculture, and the Committee on Transport, or the Committee on Works to ensure that they follow these Projects so that where there are bottlenecks, the respective Committees concerned would intervene. We should not waste too much time on this at all. These two projects should start immediately.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said, nobody can politicise food and agriculture. Nobody can politicise road or any of the other important sectors that contribute to national developments. They are important because at the end of the day, the use of the products is not politically determined. Those products are for everybody in this

country. Therefore, I call on everybody, both on this side and the other side to quickly support these Projects. I am saying this because at the end of the day, when Sierra Leone develops, everybody develops and everybody will be happy. When Sierra Leone is backward, it reflects on the people of this country. I am saying that anything that will lead to the development of this country, we will give it our greatest support. Therefore, we want to thank the Minister and the Government for bringing these Projects. Mr Speaker, when we talk of Government, we are talking of the Legislature, and when we talk of this present Legislature, it is made up of two political parties, the SLPP and the APC. These are the components that make up the present Government of this country. Therefore, these Projects are our Projects. They are our Project and we give them all the supports they need. I thank you very much Mr Speaker (*Applause*).

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA (*Majority Leader of the House & Leader of Government Business*): Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after the very beautiful opening remarks by the Honourable Komba Koedoyoma, a very senior member of this Parliament, he did say that today his heart is full of joys. By extension, what that means? In effect, that is what he has said and that has been reechoed by all other speakers that spoke after him. Therefore, if they are happy, particularly Members of the Opposition, I want to assure them that we in the APC will continue to be where we are and they will continue to be where they are (*Laughter*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all I am sure we will never fail them. After the very beautiful opening remarks by Honourable Komba Koedoyoma, Honourable Fredrick Sourie gave a professional treatment to these Projects. Other speakers like Dr Foday I. Suma, Honourable Mustapha Braima, the Paramount Chief from Kono (who has given us the impression that we now own Kono (*Applause*) endorsed these Project to be good Projects. The brilliant exposition of my friend, Honourable Sourie and finally the articulation of the Minority Leader, I am left to say is to implore the House to ratify these Agreements. Thank you very much (*Applause*).

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, would you like to respond to some or all of the issues that were raised?

MR MOMODU KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, two points captured my imagination which I thought we will look at closely with respect to the Matotoka/Sefadu Road. The comments evolved around the slow pace of implementation and bureaucracy. One thing we have all come to realise is that, we are not resigned. But any funding that involves donors takes time. Honourable Braima had been part of a particular Project. He knows the difficulties associated with projects. As I speak, the pending process for the Matotoka/Sefadu Road had been completed. Evaluation had been completed as well. The Contractors had also been identified, but we are waiting for no-objection. Until we get a no-objection, we cannot proceed. It will take off very soon. The rains will soon start dropping. When the rains stop, the Project will start in full force. I want to assure you that we are also trying to do our best in that regard. Decision has already been taken. Once this Honourable House agrees to ratify, we are going to pressurise IFAD and the Kuwait Fund for the funds to be made available. But you should also know that there is a third element, that is, the road inside Koidu Town. That road is ongoing. It is part of this programme Mr Speaker. This is also part of the strategy to tell the people that we are anxious for this thing and even the fact that you have not made your own money available. We are going to start and we have started. That is the spirit of it Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am also captured by the imagination of the comments of the Honourable P. C. Fasuluku Sonsiama III. That is the notion of the axle load specification. I think it is a very serious proposition. Being a young man in the United States, to me, a vehicle is just a vehicle, a street is a street until you go through this education and then, you hear people fighting with the State Police about the size of the road or the weight of the vehicle and the fines being impounded on them that they have exceeded the axle. That is where education comes in. You may want to ask why the Kono Road deteriorated so rapidly. Why are we not able to keep up with the repairs? Of course, Kono is a diamondiferous area. There were a lot of vehicles going to

that place and among were those vehicles carrying loads and they were in excess. This is one point I can assure this House that when I get to the office I will write to SLRA to bring this to their attention. I would take it within the context of Government that we must start installing weigh bridges along the roads so that they weigh the vehicles as they move up and down. It safeguards the roads and even the passengers in the vehicles. It is good for this to be adopted Mr Speaker. I have listened to Members of Parliament and undertones from both sides of the House. I think this has been a very good debate and I want on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Economic Development and our staff in the Ministry of Finance to thank this Honourable House. I say so because I assume by the comments that these Projects would be ratified.

On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House as follows:

"Financing Agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the execution of the Rehabilitation and Community based Poverty Reduction Programme (RCPRP) Amendment to the restated Project Finance Agreement, dated 12th March, 2013; and

Loan Agreement on the Reconstruction of the Matotoka/Sefadu Road Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Kuwait fund for Arab Economic Development, dated 20th March, 2013." I thank you.

(Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to)

HON. S. B. B. DUMBUYA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S. O. 23. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this House would recalled that some months ago, I did announce that the Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai had been elected Rapporteur or Secretary-General of the Committee on Transport, Energy, Industry, ICT, and Science and Technology, one of the Committees of the Pan-African Parliament. I did report this good news to this

House when she was elected to that position. Since then, as Head of Sierra Leone's Delegation to the Pan African Parliament, I must say and do hereby report that Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai has been doing exceptionally well. As Rapporteur, she served the Committee very well. According to the protocol of PAP, you are going to be a member of the Pan African Parliament and will continue to be a member if you continue to win elections; and you cease to be a member if you lose. Incidentally, the former Chairman and Deputy Chairman of this Committee could not return because they lost their seats in the election about a month ago. There was a meeting in Addis Ababa where we were to attend, but I could not go because of very heavy Parliamentary schedule. Therefore, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai had to go. When she went, the Chairman and the Deputy were not available because they could not return. Therefore, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai had to act as Chairperson (*Applause*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have just returned from the Plenary of the Pan African Parliament and it is only in the Plenary that formal election is held. So, the vacancies were declared formally in the plenary and Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai had expressed that she would want to go for the Chairmanship. We therefore held a meeting, the Western Caucus. Western Caucus means all countries of West Africa. We met and I as leader of the delegation, I led the campaign to have Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai elected to that position. But as you know Mr Speaker, in this gathering, the French Speaking people always have an advantage over us in terms of numerical strength. They always have this numerical advantage. They always feel superior. They feel that in any position it has to be somebody from a French country. So, even though Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai had expressed her intention to be Chairman, What they suggested as an alternative was that Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai should go for the Deputy Chairmanship. But Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai said no. She had already acted as Chairman, so, she would want the substantive position of a Chairman. We supported her and when we thought that perhaps by consensus she would be elected, they said, we should go for an election. We did go for an election and Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai won (*Applause across the Floor*).

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very proud here to say that the Chairman of the Committee on Transport and Energy, Industry (ICT), and Science and Technology of the Pan African Parliament is a Sierra Leonean in the person of Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai. And apart from the Committee on Gender, which had a woman as Chair, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai is the only woman Chairman of all the Committees in the Pan African Parliament *(Applause across the Floor)*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is the announcement and on behalf of this Parliament, I as Leader of this Honourable House would like to congratulate Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai most heartedly for this elevation. She deserves it. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would like to add to the congratulatory sentiments expressed by the Leader of this House on behalf of the entire Parliament. Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai has made us proud and for that she has our best wishes *(Applause)*.

ADJOURNMENT

(The House rose at 12.09 p.m. and was adjourned until Tuesday, 4th June, 2013, at 10.00 a.m.).