



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

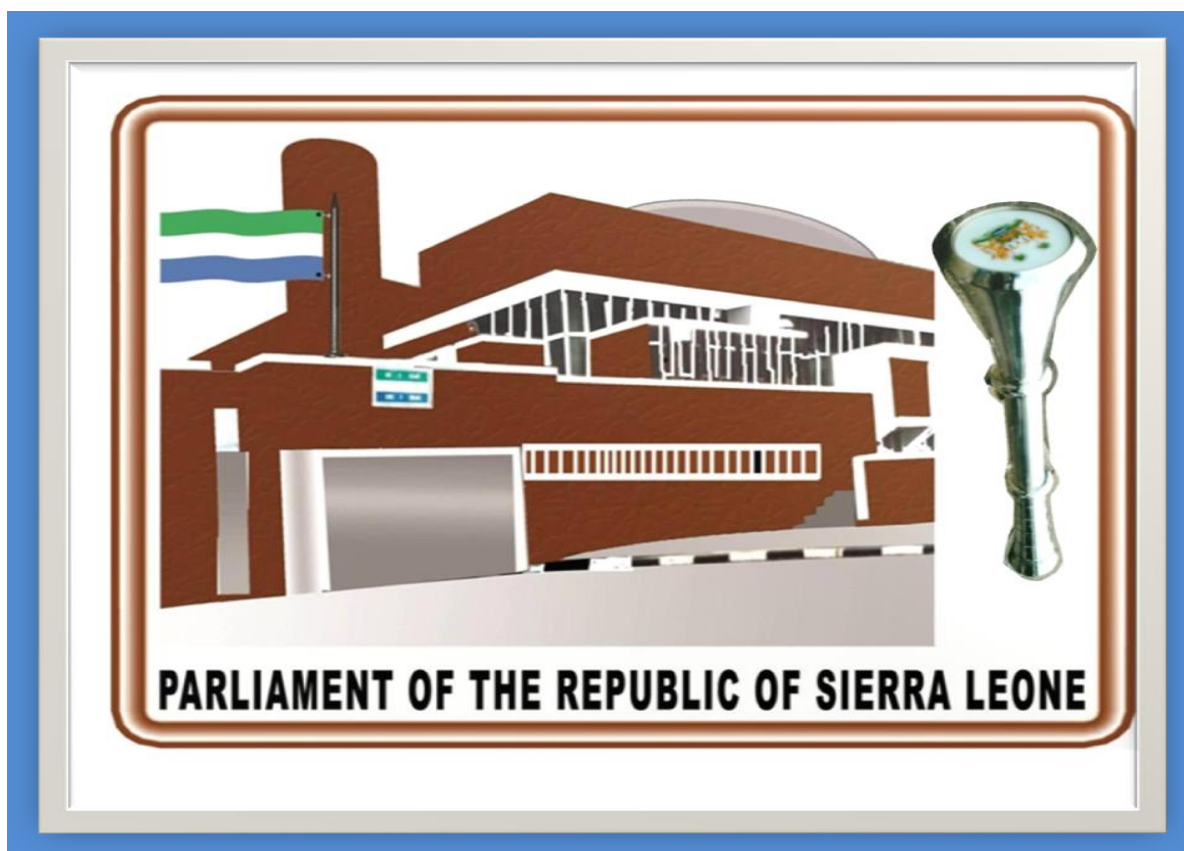
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION –FIRST MEETING

FRIDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 2023

SESSION – 2023/2024



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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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 Friday, 24th November, 2023.

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THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[FOURTH 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

Friday, 24th November, 2023.

I. PRAYERS

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we shall now consider our Votes and Proceedings, starting from page 5. Any amendment on page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Can someone please move?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. IDRIS SAHID KAMARA: I so second Mr Speaker.

Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary Sitting held on Thursday, 23rd November 2023, has been adopted].

II. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

Honourable Members, I think it is important that I say a word or two about what transpired yesterday; for the reason that it has the tendency to play the otherwise decorous proceedings that we had from the start. What we saw in this Chamber yesterday should serve as a lesson to all of us. I say this because, it vividly demonstrates that democracy is truly a system of governance that is intricate, delicate and difficult to manage. But we should neither be discouraged nor dispelled. We have a duty to our nation, to make democracy works for us, the same way it had worked for many other nations around the world. As I have said, is the creature that is very difficult to manage yet, it is the most enduring and the most resilient system of governance known to man.

Personally speaking, I hold the view very strongly that it can be managed to work for us for our own nation too; difficult though it might be, as long as we set our collective minds to ensure it works. This statement that I have made goes mostly for the new Members; for the old Members I dare say (particularly old Members who graduated from the Fifth Parliament). We have been through worst times and already, I want to believe from the Fifth Parliament, we have gained enormous experience; one that none of us can afford to forget. Nonetheless, I remain confident and resilient that we shall all succeed and our nation shall equally triumph in its practice and manifestation of all aspects of democracy. It is as I said difficult one, but not impossible. No doubt there would be distractions, deviations from time to time; that is in the nature of a beast called 'Democracy'. But we cannot of course, support any other system but the one that is so solemnly and sacredly enshrined in our Constitution of 1991 Multi-party, democratic politics, that we have worked so hard to adopt in the Constitution of 1991. Until and unless it is changed, it is incumbent on all of us to make sure it works in our nation as it has done for many other nations. So I say this especially for the new Members; please do not feel discourage or despire, you have chosen the right profession and the right place to be. What you saw yesterday is just an aspect of the new experience that you will be going through; and remember, experience is not something that you can buy, but something that you have to acquire for yourself. If any older Member sits here and say; I have done this in the light of my experience, admire him because he may have gone through quite a lot, so you are also going through the crucibles and let it not discourage you. It is a task that

we must do, and it is a task that we must accomplish with flying colours. With that said, I thank you once again for your endurance, for your patience and for being as punctual today as we were yesterday; to ensure that we commence our proceedings on time. Frankly, I am very proud of all of you and more particularly, the new Members in the House *[Applause]*. If I have lived this long, part of my life is attributable to the care and gentleness I have received from my wife *[Applause]*.

IV BILL

THE APPROPRIATION ACT 2024

SECOND READING

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY]

[Debate Continues]

THE SPEAKER: Let me share with the House, representations that I have received this morning, especially from the Leadership of the House. They have informed me that the number of Members wishing to take the Floor is increasing by the hour even more so, from the new Members; and as you are aware, we have only today and Monday to complete this debate. One available option to all of us, is to reduce the speaking time from ten to five minutes. I know those of you who have not spoken, may see it as a disadvantage compared to those who have spoken before you, who enjoyed the privilege of ten minutes; but at the same time, we are going to balance that as against the need to accommodate as many of you as possible. I may not want to seem draconian in my decision-making, I want us to move ahead by consensus. Shall we therefore say five minutes, is it agreeable?

HON. MUSTAPHA SELLU: Mr Speaker, you are the head of this particular function here.

THE SPEAKER: I have said, I would not want to be seem draconian here.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Yes Sir, you know the composition of this Parliament already before we started the debate and the allotted time given to each speaker from day one. Coming now to this fourth day you want to reduce it to five minutes; for me, it will disadvantage some of us who have not taken the Floor. So Mr Speaker, let us stick to the ten minutes exactly Sir, I thank you.

HON. OSMAN W. JALLOH: Mr Speaker, what my colleague Honourable Member is failing to understand here is that the decision came about because yesterday we had these differences among Members. We had some Members who were on the list that could not speak yesterday and they were brought forward today added to the ones that want to speak today, so the number becomes voluminous. So therefore, I must agree with you for us to reduce the time to five minutes so that we can allow those that did not speak yesterday to speak today added to those that are going to speak today, so that is the difference. So Mr Speaker, I agree with you that we should speak for five minutes; thank you.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Mr Speaker, thank you very much; I know this decision is not yours, because you have said that the Leadership of both sides held a meeting with you. Mr Speaker, I want to believe that five minutes is very small for a Legislator to submit his or her issues so what I am saying is that, we reduce our interruptions and stick to the ten minutes instead of limiting it at five minutes or to the worst case, we can have it at eight minutes I think that would be fine.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I know dealing with this issue, we are still getting more time being burned. We want to appeal to Colleague Members of Parliament; the problem we have is as you can see from the list I submitted to you. We have almost twelve Members and we still have another ten Members that are here with me; and all of them are Members of Parliament and their people are looking forward to them and the thematic areas of this budget are just almost the same and we would not want to spend all the day here, we are appealing, it is an appeal.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, in tandem with what the Minority Whip has said, I want to refer Honourable Members to S.O. [5][2] Mr Speaker with your leave I read: "Every sitting shall, unless Parliament otherwise determines, begins at 10:a.m. and unless Parliament has previously adjourned, shall continue until 3:00p.m". Let us encourage ourselves to stick to time and spend five minutes so that we would have more Members to speak, but we would not go beyond 2 O'clock.

THE SPEAKER: I do not want to pre-empt anything that the Leadership may want to do, but I think it lies within our discretion to say that and I know prayer time for us Muslims is at 1:30p.m. I have a list in front of me with nineteen names, so we should be able to accommodate all of them. What I am saying is that, if we get 150 minutes we can accommodate up to 20 Members to debate if only people stick to the time limit that we have agreed on, and maybe we stop unnecessary interruptions. For the new Members, you ought to know this; that on the fifth day, you would hardly ever get a chance to speak because the Leadership will wind up the debate and sufficient time has to be allotted to the Minister to answer to all the concerns that you have raised in the course of the debate. I will now give the Floor to Honourable Alice Kumabeh, to be followed by Honourable Abdul Latiff Sesay *[Applause]*.

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker, for giving me the time to debate to this very important document. First of all, I want to thank the Minister and his team for putting this progressive document together. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government has made tremendous gains towards construction and completion of bridges and roads and so we are looking forward to them to continue as they have started in the First Term. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that brings me to Paragraph 78 [vii] on page 21; it says: "To accelerate the ongoing construction of the Gendema, Mattru, Manowa, and Tompari bridges with support from the World Bank".

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that the bridge construction between Mattru Jong and Senahun has started; the partners are on site

and this construction is supposed to last for one year and six months, I hope it will be completed within the stipulated time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that brings me to Paragraph 126 of page 33; it reads with your leave Mr Speaker "the African Development Bank BADEA and the Kuwait Funds will also disburse **NLE137.4MLN** to support the implementation of several road projects including the Tinkoko, Kpetema, Mattru Jong road". This road is the heart-beat of the people of Bonthe District including the President, and I hope this fund would be used judiciously to fix that road; I want to allay the fears of the people who are asking among all other roads, that road is going to be fixed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we equally have other roads in Bonthe District that are equally important to that road; and these are, the road from Njagbahun junction to Sierra Rutile to Yagoi. You can all agree with me that Sierra Rutile has contributed immensely to the bread-basket of this country but the road is still a death-trap and if you think about Yagoi where they get fish to supply the whole of the South and East of this country, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that road is very bad and very soon year in, year out, the whole country will soon converge to Bonthe Island to celebrate Christmas with the President. Some people go there because they are in sympathy with the District because of thinking of the economic viability of the District and the road, but some are also very much provocative.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to implore this particular government, development partners and the Ministry of Finance to please add this road to their 2025 budget. With that Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not take my seat if I do not say that this government is doing very well as far as road construction and bridges are concerned; so let me take the opportunity to implore all Honourable Members to please approve this budget. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Abdul Latiff Sesay.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Abdul Latiff Sesay from Central Port Loko District and the North/West. Mr Speaker,

Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for allowing me to present my own part of the debate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at the theme of the budget, I will say it is very deceptive; why am I saying that? It is because how can you say you are trying to see how best you are going to protect the poor and vulnerable and you are pushing for 10% on iron ore, you are pushing for 10% in gas; is that how you want to protect your iron ore?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know why the government is struggling to have the necessary revenue to run the country, it is because they are only focusing on receiving taxes; I want to proffer here to this House that we can diversify our economy and when we diversify our economy, that will generate more revenue for government to be able to spend on its activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the area of Agriculture; Agriculture is very important we all know and I want us not to only focus on rice cultivation but we should also be thinking about other areas of Agriculture. We have what we called the Livestock aspect, we have the area of marine, we have the area of crops and all of those other areas; let us focus on those things. Mr Speaker, it may interest you that gari is more expensive now than rice and gari is supposed to be the substitute to rice and for us imposing 5% and we are now buying a bag of rice at **Le800** when the 5% is in place definitely, we will be buying it for **LE1.2MLN** *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said we have to diversify our economy; tourism, is also a way for us to be able to generate revenue. Mr Speaker, we have very good sites as compared to the Gambia because when you go to the Gambia, you do not see those kind of beautiful places that we have here in Sierra Leone but we are not spending enough money to ensure that we develop those sites so that we can attract Tourists; the Gambia is making Million of Dollars yearly from tourism.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Entertainment Industry in Sierra Leone, it seems as if we do not care about entertainment. Mr Speaker, entertainment is one

Sector that is booming the Nigerian economy currently *[Applause]*. I would tell you that they have projected that by 2025; they are going to receive over **\$4.8BLN** from Entertainment Industry and because of that, I think it is high time that as a Government, we started thinking about our Entertainment Industry. When you talk about Entertainment Industry, it is not just about music, we have the comedy sector, we have the area that has to deal with local music, and we have other areas that have to deal with our local traditions *[Applause]*. We have to ensure Mr Speaker, that we focus on those areas we can generate revenue from the Entertainment Industry but here in Sierra Leone, no sooner you are involved in entertainment, they will say that person is not serious. Nigeria is projecting **\$4.8BLN** for that money to come in by 2025.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one area that government can also generate revenue is for us to focus on State-owned Enterprises; our State-owned Enterprises are in bad shape and I will justify that, Sierra Leone Telecommunications [Sierratel] is dead. It is killed by PAOPA [SLPP]; Mr Speaker, National Insurance Company [NIC] is struggling to survive; Sierra Leone Postal Services [SALPOST] is dead and killed by SLPP; Mr Speaker, talking about Sierra Leone Airports Authority, it is also dead, killed by SLPP.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Guma Valley Water Company [GUMA], is struggling to survive; National Fire Force, is a working corpse; Sierra Leone State Lottery [LOTTO] Mr Speaker, it is also dead and buried *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, when you talk about Electricity Distribution & Supply Authority [EDSA], EDSA of course, is now running out of oxygen *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking of Sierra Leone Housing Corporation, it is dead and buried; Mr Speaker, if you talk of the Sierra Leone National Shipping Agency, it is almost struggling to survive. What about the Sierra Leone Producing Marketing Board? Mr Speaker, I will tell you that it is dead; when you talk about Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC], I will tell you, it is also running out of use.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us know that this is our country and few months ago, we were chasing our people to vote for us to come here and represent them; so because of that, let us ensure that we do justice and not allow the 5%, 10% to pass through this House if we do, we would have to go back to our people after five years; let us ensure we do justice.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much and I also just want to tell Madam Minister, please ensure that the road leading to Gbinty be paved with tar because I will be visiting Mr Speaker. I thank you very much, God bless us all *[Applause]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, you gave the Honourable Member eight minutes; you gave a reminder to the Honourable Member from four minutes, but he extended the time to eight minutes; take note, thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Mohamed Fofanah *[Applause]*.

HON. MOHAMED T. FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to join my brother, Honourable Ibrahim Fofanah of Kono District when he reminded everybody in this Well that continuity is good but the reason why our economy is struggling today is because, in 2018 when the Bio Government took administration in this country, he inherited a delapidated economy, a battered economy, an economy that has gone down the drain. Mr Speaker, in 2006 the World Bank approved **\$3BLN** as debt relief program and that was when the Late President Kabbah was in power. In 2007, Mr Speaker, the highly impoverished countries have initiative in collaboration with moderate companies that struck and cancelled debts *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Sierra Leone benefited immensely from that. In 2007, in the administration of the then President Ernest Bai Koroma, Sierra Leone's debt was cancelled up to **LE2.7TLN**; Mr Speaker, by the time His Excellency Ernest Bai Koroma left power, our debt ceiling was raised up to **LE16TLN** *[Applause]*; that is what has led us to where we are today, and that is why we have an economy that we are struggling with. Mr Speaker, the economy of our country is not as good as we expect but in as much as we agree with that Mr Speaker,

we want the people of this country to know that His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio is making positive strides *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the Presidency of Ernest Bai Koroma, we have donor partners, they contributed the highest donors so far in the history of this country in 2014 to the tune of **\$912MLN** and in 2015, donor disbursement to this country was **1.1BLN** under the Ernest Bai Koroma's led government*[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, let me refer you to page 12, paragraph 46[ii]: with effect from January 2014, the Bank of Sierra Leone [BSL] in collaboration with the relevant Regulatory Agencies will enforce the requirement to repatriate a minimum of 30% of export value into the banking system by exporters. Let me also take you to bullet 5: "Government will require all disbursements for donor funded projects to be channelled through the Bank of Sierra Leone".

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us take that into consideration; the donor disbursements we get into this country, the Millions of Dollars donors gave to this country, if those monies are channelled through our Central Bank, and converted before it gets to the beneficiaries Mr Speaker, our foreign currency reserve would not be where we are today *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the mismanagement and the tight fiscal space that we inherited, has brought us to this difficult situation that we are in today. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2017 because of bad mismanagement, because of blotted infrastructural budget by the Ernest Bai Koroma's government Mr Speaker, the extended credit facility was suspended in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to prove that His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio is an Administrator, and an administration that adhere to procedures. Barely seven months of his administration Mr Speaker, International Monetary Fund [IMF] restored the extended facilities again to this country *[Applause]*; because the International Community, evidenced by the MCC Score Card, knows that His Excellency is a man that respects the Rule of Law. The recent Score Card of the MCC that granted His Excellency the President A seat at the United Nations next to the United Nations

Secretary-General because of the successes he made in improving the economy of this country. President Bio is the only President in the world that the United Nations Secretary-General invited to share seat with him to chair the Education project because of the gains he made in the 'Free Quality Education'; we want to thank him for that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I also want to encourage my colleagues that in as much as we all agree that the economy is tough and everything is not good but however, we should be looking at things from the national point of view *[Applause]*. What are the reforms that we want to do? The tax sector needs reform. We need compliance reforms so let us come together that is why this government as a responsible government Mr Speaker, they formulated what they called the Medium Term Revenue Strategy that will help us to stabilize our domestic revenue mobilization strategies. Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Finance just last year gave **5,000** electronic cash register to NRA so that they can enable the NRA to make sure that, they collect revenue in this country that reflects their portal system; that is how a responsible government does Mr Speaker.

As I round up Mr Speaker, I also want to remind my colleagues that some of these taxes imposed on some of these things like the sugar content products, energy drinks, soft drinks is not only for monetary values but for health reasons because it is for the welfare of the people of this country Mr Speaker *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, imagine somebody consuming 10 – 25 gram of sugar per litre, if you drink 5, 10 or 20 litres per month or per year Mr Speaker, diabetes is around the corner, that is why they keep amputating our brothers and sisters because they have disease that would not be healed.

Mr Speaker, on that note I would also want to say thanks to this Administration for the workforce. Mr Speaker, we are having 5,500 plus jobs that is going to be provided next year. Mr Speaker, I want to say thank you because I want to give others the opportunity to talk. I want to say thank you to my sister Mrs Jeneba Bangura from America, for all what you have done; thank you Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: He will be followed by the Honourable Mohamed Sorieba Kamara.

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker; I have heard Members saying Kambia versus Kambia. I want to say thanks to the Speaker for giving me this opportunity more so when I am speaking immediately after my brother from Kambia.

THE SPEAKER: The present speaker would be followed by the Honourable Daniel Koroma.

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: Thank you Mr Speaker. I consider this opportunity to be a hypopotamous opportunity Mr Speaker; because I now have the opportunity to actually look at what he has said in so far as the development of this country is concerned. Mr Speaker, let me briefly hang on the statement that you delivered in this Well of Parliament on the 22nd November, 2023 at around 10:13 A.M. Mr Speaker, you made it very clear on that faithful day that the primary responsibility of this country is in the hands of this Well of Parliament; and that notwithstanding Mr Speaker, I also want to draw the attention of this House to the very important statement that you delivered on the day you welcomed us to this Well of Parliament. In that statement Mr Speaker, you asked the question where did we go wrong? If we are to answer that question, it will be in your hands because of your generation; to modify that question further *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, if we are to answer that question, the answer would be in your hands because of your generation; where did we go wrong? But to modify, or to give justice to that question I would like to modify it by saying where are we going wrong? So that we could also hold this Parliament responsible when we do things that are not in favour of the people of this country Mr Speaker *[Applause]*. So therefore Mr Speaker, I would now ask where are we going wrong, and the answer is in the hands of Members of this Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, Section [101] of this Constitution it says Parliament is the Supreme Legislative body in this country. That notwithstanding, if you look at Section [101] of this Constitution it says; it is only Parliament that has the power to authorize taxation in this

country *[Applause]*. If you also look at Section [112] of this Constitution it says; it is only Parliament that has the powers to authorize expenditure.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Point of Order Mr Speaker. The Hounourable Member referred us to Sectlion [101] of the Constitution, Sectlion [101] is clear and it is telling us about taxation; do you want to read Sectlion [101]?

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, it is Section [110] and it says: "It is only Parliament that has the power to authorize the imposition of taxes in this country *[Applause]*. That notwithstanding Mr Speaker, that is to tell this House, and to tell the people of this country that we have enormous powers to supervise, to regulate and to see that we hold the government accountable for their excesses *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, this Constitution has given enormous powers to the Executive Arm of Government and therefore, the people of this country rely on Members of Parliament to hold the government accountable for their excesses *[Applause]*. It is unfortunate Mr Speaker I must state clearly, that throughout the days that I have taken as a young man in this Parliament, what I have seen from the other side is basically, to praise-sing, to support the government in all what they are doing *[Applause]*; and I know for sure Mr Speaker, that we are here as Members of Parliament not only to praise-sing the government, but to criticise the government constructively and to ensure that we hold the government accountable for their excesses, that is why we are here as Members of Parliament *[Applause]*. But what we have seen for the past weeks is different completely when it comes to the other side of this House. It is very clear Mr Speaker, that my brother from Kambia even when we know that the road leading to Gbolohun his own village, and the village of the former President, the late Ahmad Tejan Kabbah *[Mummuring]*, he sees nothing wrong with that absolutely. As far as he is concerned, he wants to be in the good books of his political party; one of the problems Mr Speaker, that we have in this country, is Section [77][k] in the 1991 Constitution.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, on that note I will now take you to the aspect of Agriculture; Mr Speaker if you look at agriculture, it is very clear that the government is probating and reprobating Mr Speaker...

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: In this document Mr Speaker, the government is saying they want to feed the people of Sierra Leone, but if you impose taxes on the domestic farm lands of the people of this country, then you are probating and reprobating Mr Speaker. On that note Mr Speaker, I want to say plenty thanks to the government of Sierra Leone; when I look at this document, it is very clear Mr Speaker, that the government is proposing to take care of the road leading to Tonko Limba, the government is proposing also to take care of the 'Feed Salon' project and they have included Mambolo and Ketchon. Mr Speaker, I am recommending...

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no recommendation here...

HON. MOHAMED S. KAMARA: On that note Mr Speaker, I want to say thanks for giving me the opportunity *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me draw the attention of the House *[Undertones]* to the fact that after consultations with the Leadership, we agreed on five minutes; but it is very clear to me now that Members are not sticking to the five minutes so I want to invite the two Leaders again. May I have the attention for a moment of the two Leaders? In the same way, you advised on the timing, please reflect that it is proving very difficult to maintain. I will now give the Floor to Honourable Alice Sandy.

HON. ALICE K. SANDY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker for the opportunity, to participate in this all important debate. I would like to thank the Ministry of Finance for giving us a comprehensive and detailed budget. I am sure the previous Debaters before me have debated extensively on other areas; before I come to my debate, there are certain clarifications I would like to bring out to this Honourable House.

The Honourable from Bombali, I want to thank you for being so passionate about sports; however Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what the Honourable Member was not practical about was that, it is under this present dispensation that the Premier League was restored *[Applause]*; it is under this same dispensation that today, the renovation of the National Stadium is ongoing; this same Stadium which the CAF raised so many concerns over the years is now undergoing rehabilitations; it is also under this same dispensation Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that Sierra Leone can now boast of the first ever Female League in Sierra Leone *[Applause]*; it is also under this same dispensation Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we can now boast of a Female Sports Minister.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also want to commend the Honourable Member from Western Area, my learned colleague and senior; he was sincere in his debate and was being nationalistic in his approach, the Honourable Member was sincere to mention that as a country, we import almost everything including the plaintain chips but Mr Speaker, that is even better because it is food but it was here in Sierra Leone in 2016 when a whole Cabinet sat to approve the importation of 'trash' in this country *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, the Lebanon 'poopoo' if not for the timely intervention of Sierra Leoneans in this country, only God knows what would have happened to us Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, coming now to road safety; by your age I presume you may likely be the only person in this House who may have driven a vehicle before street lights in Freetown, the previous administration fooled this country by installing street lights that were mere toys*[Applause]*; but if you walk through the streets of Freetown today, if you drive through the streets of Freetown you would see the installation of real traffic lights that is going to last for some time *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, also coming to the overhead bridges you can see in areas like Lumley, Ferry Junction and Wilberforce, there are overhead bridges made to protect pedestrians while walking along the streets of Freetown. There is also the ultra-

modern Lumley Market that is also on-going; Mr Speaker, not to talk about the car park that is also ongoing under the urban resilient project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now come to my main area which is found on paragraph 91 of page 25. With your leave Mr Speaker I will read: "In addition to enhancing transparency in public procurement, the NPPA will provide training and support local businesses, to enhance their capacity to participate in Government's tenders. In this regard, the NPPA will create an inclusive environment for SMEs especially in public procurement, by introducing set-asides, margin of preference or quotas simplify the bidding process and develop capacity building programmes to help SMEs compete effectively for Government's Contracts. The NPPA will also review the threshold for non-competitive bidding to avoid contract splitting and allow SMEs to participate effectively, in the supply of goods and services to the Government and Private Sectors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in this regard this is a testament to all what this government has done for the women of this country; the government has not only enacted the GEWE Act which has today saw an increase in the number of women leaders we have today in this House *[Applause]*; we now have 42 women representing the women of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today in this House also, Sierra Leone has moved from 155th position of the IPU ranking of female representation in Parliament to 77th position Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the testament to all what this government has done, the government has now moved to a male dominated area which is the business community; the government is trying to help women in business communities by setting margin of preference to help encourage these women to thrive in the business community. It is true to give honour to whom honour is deserved and let us at least be sincere to ourselves to say that the SLPP Government has tried for the women of this country.

On that note Mr Speaker, I now urge Members on the other side to help or support this Government to succeed because when we succeed as a government, your position as an Opposition in this country will be guaranteed; thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Alpha B. Mansaray.

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Alpha Ben Mansaray from Moyamba District specifically from Ribí and Bumpé Chiefdoms. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure this House and Members from the other side that the Opposition is ready to support the nation's development provided if we are genuine to our consciences. We can tax the poor people year in year out but the challenge is, if we fail to deliver them then we have done injustice to this nation. Mr Speaker, this budget is just a projection because year in year out we project figures but we cannot continue to project figures whilst we do not even consider the implementation of these figures; and not only the implementation, but also the evaluation of these figures, and not only the evaluation, but the modification of the feedback you get from the field and Mr Speaker, we need to change the trajectory.

Mr Speaker, let me take you to health; Mr Speaker, this nation is challenged with health issues. We are all aware the challenges as Members of Parliament. We are challenged with structures that have to do with peripheral health units [PHUs], we have CHPs, we have MCHPs, we have Community Health Centres, most of these CHUs are being provided by communities, communities offered dwelling houses and you cannot even find beds in most of these communities health centres. Mr Speaker, you can say eleven years when President Koroma launched the Free Health Care, the Health for All Coalition which is the supervisory body can attest to the fact that the Free Health Care was helping. As I speak Mr Speaker, my District from January to date, recorded 17 maternal deaths and these are just recorded ones let us not joke with this; take this message as Members of Parliament, go to your various Chiefdoms and assess these health facilities so that we can help the government to support them but when we are not genuine to ourselves, we just support the budget without looking at the services

our people are supposed to receive, we are deceiving even the President and the Minister of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to the Ambulance services; you can agree with me that we have so many ambulances but most of them are parked. My District suffered this issue of maternal death because of lack of Ambulance services. I want to appeal to the Minister of Finance, to collaborate with Line Ministries to ensure the Ambulance services are restored to serve the people *[Interruptions]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to recommend to this House that the transport sector even Honourable Sellu is from Moyamba District knows that all the Chiefdoms in Moyamba District are facing challenged with ambulance services; although he wants to object to what I am saying, he is doing injustice to the people of Moyamba District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to add dignity to the health workers of this nation; I can see from Waterloo, to Connaught, to Cottage, to King Harman Road Hospital, health workers are having problems with transportation to go to work. Mr Speaker, I want to appeal to the Minister of Finance; I heard of buses please Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let the Minister of Transport and Aviation provide bus services for health workers.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: On that note Mr Speaker, let me take you to roads; **319BLN** was allocated for 40 roads in this nation; in 2021, they supervised those roads by re-graveling them but yet, they did not succeed to ensure those roads are completed. The road leading from Moyamba going through to Sembehun, the home town of Honourable Sellu to Shenge, the road from Mabang to Rotifunk *[Undertone]*...

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, my name is mentioned repeatedly, and I have to make this clarification.

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, I withdraw.

THE SPEAKER: With that...

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: On that note Mr Speaker, the Youth Sector, the Youth Farm was launched three years ago but...

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no you cannot start something new...

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: But how many youths were employed Mr Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: No, no,...

HON. ALPHA B. MANSARAY: I want to thank you Mr Speaker for giving me this opportunity; once again, let us support this nation, let us support the Government of Sierra Leone and this House should be genuine to the people of this country. I thank you Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the new Members of Parliament, I want us to be reminded of S.O. [32][16] Mr Speaker; I noticed the Member of Parliament from Moyamba that has just spoken has been naming Honourable Mustapha Sellu continuously. He should be guided, and for other Members that will be speaking thereafter, you should be guided by S.O. [32][16]. I thank you very much.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, my name was mentioned persistently like the Leader said; I want to make just one clarification Sir *[Interruptions]*. I am talking to Mr Speaker and he has to take decision on that. Mr Speaker, do I have the Floor Sir?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, you do.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Alright! Thank you, and may God bless you Mr Speaker. For the Ambulance services in the Moyamba District Mr Speaker I want to make it very clear that quite recently *[Interruptions]*, under the government of this regime, they have constructed a new brand Community Health Centre with a new brand Ambulance located in Gbabura Chiefdom.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, take your seat.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Secondly, there are operational ambulances across the District up to five *[Interruptions]*; Mr Speaker, let me make that very clear because my brother from Moyamba was making claims that are not true.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, thank you.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, thank you. One of the ground rules we agreed on was that we should not interrupt the debate *[Interruptions]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I would not disappoint you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Do you want to abrogate the position or you want to incline?

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: No, I will not disappoint you.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Ibrahim Kabba.

HON. IBRAHIM KABBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Ibrahim Kabba from the Western Rural. The Presidential Speech is like the Budget Speech, it is very important to give credence to it because we have to look at the interest of our people. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us go straight to the Budget; page [30] paragraph [109] I am coming from the Western Rural, and I believe we have 641 fish mining sites all over this country from Kulagba that is the Guinea border to Sulima, the Liberia border. After looking at this budget, I noticed that this budget makes a lot of provisions for that Ministry and the people that are surviving from the Fishing Sector. I made another research and compared it to another budgets being tabled in this House years back; I looked at the 2016 budget that was tabled here by the then Minister of Finance, Dr Kelfala Marah. I also looked at the one in 2017 that was tabled here again by Momodu L. Kargbo; when you put those two budgets, their interest was so minimal in that particular sector. But this budget speaks much in the area of fisheries; and we have over one million people that are dealing with fish and its management in this country. Therefore, this particular budget is a tough budget and if I have to go further, I will call this budget the Fisherman's friend.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to the Honourable Member from Bombali; he was opposing the Bio Government since its inception in 2018 to date. But let me tell you something, I want to make a little bit of clarification here; my brother Honourable Charles John Conteh from Bombali District in his own Constituency before President Maada Bio came to power, children were taken the external exams in Kamalo and Kamakwe which is 9 to 17 miles from Kamaranka but when President Maada Bio took over, to date, they are taking all external exams in Kamaranka town and before President Maada Bio took over; let me make it very clear, that particular area is now benefiting from the Minigrid electrical power; Pamraka Chiefdom has electricity for now, it was not there before this government took over governance *[Undertone]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are talking about tourism most of the tourist potentials is in the Western Area/Rural so Madam Minister, whenever they are preparing the next budget, let us look at the roads leading to No. 2 Beach, Sussex Beach where we have the Governor's Harbour or Governor's Lodge it is a prime road, and let us look at the road leading to Hamilton and Goderich is another prime road to link the fishery communities.

THE SPEAKER: And on that note...

HON IBRAHIM KABBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I want to say thank you to Honourable Timbo and the Honourable from Bombali, they are very nationalistic in their debates and I am encouraging everybody from the other side to do likewise so that we can take Sierra Leone to another level. I thank you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to Honourable Mohamed Sheriff Kargbo.

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my name is Mohamed Sheriff Kargbo representing the people of Karene District *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister or whoever is representing him *[Interruption]*, I hope my time will be considered. I want to take this opportunity to thank you Mr Minister for spending sleepless nights to

put such a wonderful document together; I doff my hat to you, you have become my friend Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you take your time to look at the document Mr Speaker; and if anyone understands what morphology and syntax are, you would realise that the document is syntaxmatically and paradigmatically compiled *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, this compilation is not for nothing but it is only for it to be sweet in our ears during the reading; it is only for making of the document to be sweet in our ears but nothing else Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: It seems you have another...

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if what I have said is correct Mr Speaker; I want to assure this House that the reading of this document is putting honey into the ear of man and not the mouth. This is putting honey into the ears of man and not the mouth Mr Speaker meaning; when man puts honey into the ear of man, it can only ache but it cannot treat mankind Mr Speaker *[Applause]*, this is the document we are talking about. Mr Speaker, there is nothing absolutely hopeful in this document for a turnaround of the economy of this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this document has not got nothing to make a turnaround in this country because if you go through this document, you will realise that all the ideas embedded in it and the so-called policy statements are photocopy of the ideas of the previous Minister and therefore, they would make nothing order than deceit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, no matter how ugly something is there must be something beautiful; I spotted two beautiful things in this document. Mr Speaker, paragraph [129] page [34] the document talks about water supply and then, paragraph [60] page [17] talks about the Free Health Care; if it happens Mr Speaker, it will be a laudable one; we will applaud you, we will commend you for a job well done.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: On that note, if this is going to be done, all of us will be singing and clapping for you but if it is not done Mr Speaker, the opposite of 'tok and do' will be 'tok and lie'. Mr Speaker, finally I want to talk about the Gbinty road...

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no.

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, it is very important because I am rounding-up now. The Makeni/Kamakwe Road, Madina Rural Road Mr Speaker, is very important for the development of the economy of this country. This road was under construction but few months after the announcement of the result in 2018, the machines were removed from the construction site with no explanation whatsoever up till today; and this road is believed, that Mali, as one of the largest countries in Africa has got no international seaport, they are using four countries in the sub-region to do their import and export and it is believed Sierra Leone is the closest port to Mali. Mali is using Ghana, it is using Ivory Coast, it is using Senegal and then Togo for doing their export and importation and it is believed that more than half of their flights go to these four countries and because Sierra Leone is the closest port to Mali but because of the road network, Mali decides to go to these countries. Imagine if we construct the Makeni/Kamakwe, the Madina Rural Road, Mali would have come to us to use Sierra Leone as a Port *[Applause]* and so all the flights that go to those four countries, they would come to us and this is how the economy would have been blossomed; you would have had a blossom economy.

THE SPEAKER: And with that...

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: But because the road is not constructed, we are losing today Mr Speaker. On that note, I want to encourage this government to make sure it continues with the already started construction work from Makeni to Madina. I thank you Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I really want to thank the Honourable Member, I never knew him before until today, but you are my representative *[Applause]*.

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Although you have given yourself a nickname 'frog.'

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Yes, the only human frog in the House.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Fatmata Soukenah.

HON. FATMATA SOUKENAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, my name is Fatmata Sarah Soukina commonly known as 'the Reverend'. I am a Pastor and I only speak the word of the Lord to every man in this Parliament *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank my sister and all the Administrators of the Finance for this document that they have put together; I want to thank them very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank them because they are the founders of these words but the man who is going to put it in place is His Excellency Julius Maada Bio *[Applause]*; I have no doubt Mr Speaker, that this document is another 'big cargo' that we are going to achieve *[Applause]*. I remember in 2018, when President Bio came to power Mr Speaker, all of what he has given to us is to bring education to our children, bringing the country to this part of governance, he has done a great work *[Applause]*; and Mr Speaker, I believe that this book will bring great joy to this nation *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, I was much younger before getting old because when you are young, you will get old. Mr Speaker, I was very young when my mother and father were farmers in this country, we eat from the farm and we were educated from the farm, farming can do more than other sectors *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know politics is one thing and party business is another. Party business is when you are in APC and I am in SLPP, when we are outside we confront to each other *[Applause]*, but when we come into the Well Mr Speaker, please let us be as one so that we can push the business of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*. What I want to say again Mr Speaker, most of you in APC seated there, you are young men. How do you feel when you are working for your people with all sincerity and there is another person bringing you down, how do you feel *[Applause]*? Stop bringing President Bio down he has done what no President has done, not even Siaka Stevens.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, can I have your leave to read this scripture that I want the House to hear; it says: He that is unjust let him be unjust still, whoever is filthy let them continue to be filthy; he that is condemning the good books of Sierra Leone, let them continue to condemn but remember in the same Revelation 22:11 says: With all these evils that you are doing to the people of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*, whenever a good book like that is brought to Parliament for you to approve, you are doing something else *[Applause]* but remember that one day, for this of your evil you will give account for what you have done *[Undertone]*.

Mr Speaker, President Bio took away the Libel Law and today we are free from that. On that note, I want to thank the Ministry of Finance for all that you have done, keep it up and continue to work because I know you will succeed *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to Dr Unpha Sorie Gbassay Koroma.

HON. DR UNPHA S.G. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how can I match what the former Honourable Member just did, how can I match that? Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in society, there is a Greek proverb that says: "A Society grows great when old men plant trees, remove shade; they shall never sit".

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we enter the first year of the second term of this government, we are forced to look at documents and match this government with its words against its achievements.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2018 and 2019, budgets brought to this House lots of promises were made to the people of this country; and if you match the rhetoric in those budgets, juxtapose it with the matrix in this budget, I think it is a humbly posture of this government *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2018, 2019 and 2020, the inflation rate were 16.03, 13.45 and 14.81 respectively; but today as we speak, in August the inflation was 50.45 and in September, the inflationary rate was 54.48 *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you can agree with me; and if I can speak for the millions of Sierra Leoneans across this country from Freetown to Kabala, Koinadugu to

Kenema – Nongorwa to Bo – Kakua, from Taiama to Bo, you will all agree with me that the economy is worse-off than it was six years ago *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to the world economic outlook by the IMF; with your leave Mr Speaker, I would like to read: Global inflation is expected to fall from 8.7% in 2022 to 6.9% in 2023 and 5.8% in 2024 though in the budget conveniently Mr Speaker, on page [1] of paragraph [2], the government instead of talking about inflation, it only spoke about economic development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the simple question we would like to ask is has this government be in conformity with what is enshrined in the PFM Act, the Public Financial Management Act which makes it clear that government should effectively and prudently manage the resources of this country. But they have not done that. To us in this Well, we should be asking whether the government is in a better position to fix the situation in this country. This government, will it be in a better position to feed Sierra Leone? All of us want to see this government feed Sierra Leoneans considering the challenges we are going through as Sierra Leoneans? It is apolitical but how will this government manage that if they had not effectively managed the purse of this country? How can you talk about feeding Sierra Leone without talking about our marine resources? How can you talk about feeding Sierra Leone when the government has not met the threshold on the Maputo Protocol of 10%?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the budget in 2018 and 2019 essentially, this government has not given much to agriculture. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the average Sierra Leonean cannot afford a square meal a day; six years ago, we have witnessed **154%** rise in prices and six years ago to now, we have experienced **67.25%** decrease in the value of the same amount of money; but we are saying we want to feed Sierra Leone with only a little less of the 7% in our budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, since this government came to prominence, it is unfortunate to note that even wages and salaries have been extremely difficult so when they put a picture or paint that 7% is going to agriculture essentially, that amount really

is not all that should go into agriculture to see the desired effect of what agriculture is producing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Annex [3b] under the Big Five, where it says: Feed Sierra Leone, it is consistent with what we will see on paragraph [107] where it says the total allocated amount, also includes **80Mln** from the recurrent budget; but when you go to the budget of 2018, the government gave or spent **101,423Bln** on recurrent budget. So if you are saying you want to feed Sierra Leone from agriculture, but you are spending less on the recurrent budget then it means the government is not really serious about feeding the people of this country *[Applause]*. If you want to go back into agricultural research; in 2018 and 2019, government gave **5Bln** and **7Bln** respectively to SLARI [Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute] but now government is only giving **NSL:10Mln** to SLARI, so how can you seriously change the narrative of agriculture and feed Sierra Leone?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me fast-forward to health; the government has not also spent much in health, the Honourable Member from Western Urban at Lumley stated earlier that, he is looking for government to spend money on the hospital at Lumley but unfortunately, there is a hospital at Calaba Town that is also languishing and the government has not spent monies into health as sufficient as it should be.

THE SPEAKER: And with that...

HON. DR UNPHA S. G. KOROMA: Mr Speaker, we have what we called the Building Blocks of the healthcare system. Building blocks of the healthcare system calls for leadership and governance, and also calls for financing and technology but if you are not spending sufficient amount in health which is also a very important Sector in our country, which all of us here in this Well will benefit from, then what does it tell you about the budget towards health? Mr Speaker, I would conclude to say because of time, that government does not need to increase taxes on our people because if you look at 2021, 2022 and 2023 the revenue government got from those years were **7Bln**, **10Bln** and **14Bln** respectively which means there was an increment in domestic revenue so the increase in prices will not help at all. What this government needs to do is to

increase their tax base, make sure NRA is more efficient and by doing that, we would ensure that you secure the requisite revenue to benefit the people of this country *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of time and on that note, I will tell you that we need to fix the exchange rate in this country and if we do not fix it, government will not be able to feed the people of Sierra Leone. I thank you Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Alie Bayoh.

HON. ALIE BAYOH: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Alie Bayoh representing Kenema District by extension, Tunkia and Normor Chiefdoms *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to have one or two words on this budget; it is very important as far as I am concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before going into the nitty-gritty of this budget with a specific page, I want to make a clarification Mr Speaker with regards to what the Honourable Member from Bombali District said about me. I am not a Lecturer, but he did mention something concerning my Chiefdom that I am coming from which is the Normor Chiefdom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as the adage says "if you are not informed, you are deformed by default". Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bombali did say that, the price of a bag of rice in Normor Chiefdom is expensive than the price of a bag of rice in Bombali District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me make this clarification it is not true because in Normor Chiefdom, we grow what we eat, we eat what we grow and we sell what we grow *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave I want to paraphrase the word of the 35th President of the United States of America, who was John F. Kennedy once said, and I quote: "As we express our gratitude, we must not forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them".

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

THE SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order?

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: I am standing on S.O. 34. The Honourable Member is in short sleeve Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, leave that with me; that is my responsibility *[Applause]*.

HON. MOHAMED S. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I demand your ruling.

HON. ALIE BAYOH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for instance, let us look at the budget itself; page [5] paragraph [29].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, hold on a second; on what the two Leaders agreed, that interruption would not be tolerated on this day to allow as many Members to be able to speak but what I noticed is that, we are not able to police that very well. Carry on please.

HON. ALIE BAYOH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Let us look at Page [5] paragraph [29] Mr Speaker; I think the Ministry of Finance is very honest with this budget. It did not shy away to say that there is no increase in the cost of living. Mr Speaker, let me read it says "the difficult and uncertain global economic, environment and spill-over to our economy, combined with policy slippages, have translated into the challenging of micro-economic situation which in turn, have led to an increase in the cost of living". Mr Speaker, he did not shy away from the brutal realities but it is not by his own making Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a global challenge *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 2024 budget is very peculiar as far as I am concerned so we have to take this debate genuinely, and with all sincerity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you look at Section [97][b] of the 1991 Constitution, as we are here to represent our people so if we are giving a submission, we are critiquing the budget, it is your responsibility to also proffer solutions towards the budget *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara did mention something which is very important about the problem of Sierra Leone. He did say, we

do not have problem with experience and credentials but what we have problem of is service delivery and performance.

THE SPEAKER: And on that note...

HON. ALIE BAYOH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note today if they are on that side Mr Speaker, it is because eleven years in power they could not perform well for the people of this country *[Applause]*. Today, we are in power because we did perform extensively well for the people of this country; tomorrow, we would be here as well because indeed, we are going to perform extensively well for the people of this country and come 2028 Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we would remain in power; President Bio will continue to work for the people of this country. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor, to the Honourable Hamidu Roland Mansaray.

HON. HAMIDU H. MANSARAY: Thank you Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Hamidu Roland Mansaray from Koinadugu District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on my way to work this morning, I saw huge queues at gas stations and I hope it is not business as usual.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister and his team but this document is full of sugar-quoted words. Mr Speaker, I want to refer to colleague speaker on the other side yesterday that said, during our governance we added 5% tax on rice and then, the price of rice was sky-rocketed. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2018, the SLPP came in governance and waved up this 5% and now 5 years down the line we are buying a bag of rice at Le800 without tax. Mr Speaker, now we are having 5% of tax on rice in 2024, and 10% of tax on rice in 2025; it is as if the Government or the Ministry of Finance is urging us to buy a cow for its voice, we would just be paying for something we have not seen.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would want to go to the Flagship of the President, "The Feed Salon"; and when I went through the speech, I would refer you to page [13]

paragraph [49]. I saw some areas that were mentioned but among those areas, there was nothing mentioned about Koinadugu District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the past years, Koinadugu District has been the land of powerful mixture unto this moment Mr Speaker. You cannot succeed by feeding Sierra Leone without considering Koinadugu District; it is impossible Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to zoom in on infrastructure; which is very important. Mr Speaker, I will take you to page [33] paragraph [125]; Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the road from Makeni to Kabala, you would not want to visit there for a second time; the road is in a very deplorable state Mr Speaker. The timber trucks have left that road in ruins unto this moment, that road is very bad to access now. We are very close to the festive season when we will be having people who would be visiting the hills the Wara-Wara Mountain as we all know.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of these days, I was having too many questions on the Finance Act and the Budget. I told my people let us brace up for the worst; let us brace up to face the music because I will tell you that whatever that is indicated in the Finance Act and the Budget, has got to do with taking back what the people have fought for the past three to four years to eat with their families. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am representing Koinadugu and by extension, I am also representing Wara-Wara, Bafodia, Kamiso and Kamukeh Chiefdoms.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kamiso is one of the deprived Chiefdoms in this country Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Kamiso is one Chiefdom that produces one of the highest products in agriculture in Koinadugu District; we have to be considerate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, coming to Wara-Wara, Bafodia, and Kamukeh Chiefdoms; Mr Speaker, these are all areas that have high products from agriculture but none of them were captured in this report.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to be very succinct and I want to urge the Minister and his team and the Government to pay attention to Koinadugu District

because Koinadugu is a land of powerful mixture, and we always remains the same. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. SIA MAHAWA A. TOMMY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Sia Mahawa Adiamo Tommy, representing Kono District *[Applause]*. I wish I had enough time to shower enough accolades and praises on the Minister of Finance and his team but unfortunately I only have five minutes to make my points.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, despite all the challenges, all the risks, all the problems that were highlighted in the Budget Speech; the Government, because it is a responsible government, is proffering solutions to these problems *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the government plans to implement several safety net programs, in order to ease the burden on the poor and vulnerable individuals including women.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what Sierra Leone is going through actually, is not self-inflicted it is a global crisis and Sierra Leone is part of the global community; and whatever hits the global community will hit Sierra Leone because, we are not an exception to that *[Applause]*. So what the actual debate should be is to find solutions to the problems that are coming *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to take this House to pages [17 and 18] of the Budget Speech focusing on paragraph [61 – 66]. Mr Speaker, the government mentioned that they would be providing employment for **7,000** Youths in the Rural Areas and **6,000** Youths in the Urban Areas this is what we called good governance *[Applause]*. And also, providing grants to 400 groups of persons with disability, additional cash transfer to **15,000** extremely poor households with priority given to female beneficiaries. Mr Speaker, there is a saying by Nelson Mandela that says “a man’s goodness is a flame that can be hidden, but can never be extinguished”. You can choose not to talk about the good things that are embedded in this document. It is

always going to be there, because those things are tangible things *[Applause]*, those things are life-changing things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not by mistake that I am standing here as a youth and a woman. Mr Speaker, Franklyn Roosevelt once said: "We cannot always continue to build the future for our youths, but we can build the future for our youths"; and that is exactly what His Excellency the President is doing. Mr Speaker, if you turn to page [23], paragraph 85 [ii, iii & iv] there you would find out that, the President really cares about young people. When His Excellency the President was talking about the Five Big Changers, people with myopic mind-set were finding it very difficult to understand what it means; but when you look at this Budget Speech, you would know exactly what it means, and you would know exactly what the Five Big Changers are speaking to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on page [23], you would find the Youth Employment Programmes [YEP] and that has to do directly with Cluster 3 of the Five Big Changers providing employment for the Youths *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, His Excellency the President, is building the youths for the future and not building the future for the youths; because he wants us to learn how to fish so that we can fish for ourselves *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, I just want to throw light on few things that were said yesterday in this House. I understood the words of President Bio when he was warning the people of Sierra Leone; I quote "APC nor gud for den sef, den nor gud for this country" *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, yesterday I was sitting here listening to the Honourable Member from Kambia saying that Siaka P. Stevens did well for this nation; it is a shame Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it will interest you to know that it was under the regime of the late Siaka P. Stevens that the State Owned Enterprise, which was the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board [S.L.P.M.B] that was responsible was actually a bedrock for the achievement of Agriculture but when Siaka Stevens took over what he

did was to close the S.L.P.M.B *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, because of the existence of the S.L.P.M.B, we used to have lots of factories like NATCO, which was producing biscuits, the Aureol Tobacco Company and the Wellington area was referred to as an 'Industrial Area'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, again, it was under the regime of the same Siaka Stevens, that we had the slogan S.O. [2] "you nose long lek toe-line". Our people used to stand in a queue for just a cup of rice, and that was the time mothers were losing their babies on their backs just to get a cup of rice, and you are here telling me that Siaka Stevens set a great precedent.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. SIA MAHAWA A. TOMMY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kono on the other side, was using grammar yesterday to address the people; so I want to use this moment to elucidate on the dichotomy between the APC and the SLPP when it comes to development in Kono.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. SIA MAHAWA A. TOMMY: Mr Speaker, on that note the APC is claiming that they did the township roads in Kono but it will interest you to know that it is the S.L.P.P., the Bio led government that is paying for that road now. I find it so humorous when the Member of Parliament from Bombali was mentioning that the SLPP Government is 'Owned Monger' of which, the actual meaning of 'Owned Monger' is being attributed to the APC; they cannot pay for the road they are boasting about.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. SIA MAHAWA A. TOMMY: Mr Speaker, on that note I would like to highlight few things that the people of Kono have benefited from this Government; Mr Speaker, we now have a maternal centre of excellence...

THE SPEAKER: You have exhausted your time.

HON. MAHAWA H. TOMMY: Thank you Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Daniel Fornah.

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Daniel Fornah representing Tonkolili District; representing the people of Gbonkeleke, to be precise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would not want to blame the young Honourable Member who has made a statement here regarding the S.L.P.M.B; because she is very young, that is why she is making that statement and she was not well informed *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to educate the young Honourable Member that, the S.L.P.M.B was closed by the Late President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O [34]; for us to set the record straight. Mr Speaker, we are live on television and the public is listening to us; so let us have the record straight. When SLPP took over in 1996, there was no S.L.P.M.B; it was a Management Committee that was running the S.L.P.M.B at Cline Town.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, there was National Provisional Ruling Council [NPRC] before SLPP.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: We are not talking of N.P.R.C.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: So it was not President Stevens, you cannot neither lie to the public, nor mislead them.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable Members please...

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: The Manager was the former President, Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah *[Undertones]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: That was in the 60s, I just want to respect my Leader. Honourable Members please, let us have one meeting.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader, with all due respect Sir, let us allow the debate to continue. Let me tell you our strategy; when somebody makes an unsubstantiated

statements, I will call on the next speaker and tell him the correct statement; so do the same.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: So you are now telling somebody to correct him thereafter? But what he said was not right.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Then tell your next speaker; do not interrupt him *[Applause]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: That strategy is wrong; we should set the record straight, we all know that the S.L.P.M.B was closed during the APC.

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to use the sweet office of the Deputy Finance Minister here present, to take this message to the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, that the people of Tonkolili District are tired of buying a bag of rice at Eight hundred thousand Leones [Le800, 00].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this House that in 2017, when the Presidential Debate was conducted at Bintumani, the President made a statement that the people of Sierra Leone are tired of buying a bag of rice at two hundred thousand Leones [200,00]; so I want to inform this House that my people from Tonkolili District are tired of buying a bag of rice at eight hundred thousand Leones [800, 00] *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it worries my people in Tonkolili District when I look at the page under Infrastructure. Mr Speaker, for the edification of this House, Tonkolili is the centre of Sierra Leone, Tonkolili borders with seven Districts in this country which are, Kono, in Masingbe; Koinadugu, in Sama Bendugu; Kenema, in Mondema area; it boundaries with Bo, in Yele; Port Loko, in Yoni and Moyamba District. So it is very worrying for my people to see that we have three major roads in Tonkolili District and none of them is included in this budget *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am worried because during the campaign, even the Vice President went to Gbonkelenke three times telling the people that he came from that place. It is very much worrisome to know that, the Matotoka/Bo Road is not included in this budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this House to the revenue mobilization that the Minister presented in the budget in this House. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform you that you cannot only improve the economy by increasing taxes, but you can also improve the economy by controlling your expenditure *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I look at the import duties, the projection made for 2024, it shows clearly that this Government is very inefficient in terms of revenue mobilization. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to do some projections here. When you look at the actual import duties that was recorded in this budget in 2022, is about **LE850BLN** Leones [for the records, any money that I call here is in the old Leones] because, my people are not comfortable with the New Leones *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, in 2023 the estimated budget of the import duty is about **LE1.176TRN**, so the difference between the two is about **LE326BLN**. If you could recall Mr Speaker, in 2022 and 2023, there has not been an increase in import duties on rice, iron ore and cooking gases; so it means Mr Speaker, if only the Government is efficient in terms of mobilizing resources, they can actually make more money in import duties.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I take a look at the increase in import duties, the estimated amount for 2024 is about **LE1.8TRN**, the difference between that is very small. Mr Speaker, the Minister made mention of the amount of money we spend to order rice in this country is **LE200MLN**, which is about **LE5.6TRN**; and when you apply 5% estimate on that amount, it is about almost **LE300BLN** to be derived from the import duties and I also made an estimation on the import of cement which for example is about **\$70MLN**, which is about **LE1.9TRN** and when you apply the 10% estimate is about **LE392BLN**. I also made estimation in the import of iron ore, which is about **\$50MLN** making an estimated amount of about **LE140BLN** *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, I made an estimate on cooking gas which is about **LE5MLN**, and when you apply the exchange rate, it is about **LE7BLN** making a total of about **LE900BLN** that can be derived from this additional taxes we have imposed; but when you look at the budget Mr Speaker, you will see that only **LE600BLN** was estimated where is the

LE300BLN going to Mr Speaker *[Applause]*? So it shows the inefficiency of the Government to mobilize revenue.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: On that note Mr Speaker, when you take a look at the Telecommunications industry; I can tell this House Mr Speaker, that the very Organization that is the Agency, the National Telecommunications Authority; I can tell you with confidence that it is losing well over **LE150BLN** every year to the mobile networks in the country due to the incompetency of those that are handling that Organisation *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to believe that if we are to improve this economy, we must not only look at adding taxes on our people; which increases burden on them but I want to say here that, we also have the Office of The Chief Minister and we are also now seeing in this budget, the Office of the Chief Security Officer *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: No, you are now gearing to a new topic.

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: This is waste of resources Mr Speaker; and I can tell you that **LE4BLN** is projected in this budget for that Office of the Chief Security Officer, which can construct not less than 10 culverts in most of these villages *[Applause]*; and when you multiply it by five Mr Speaker before the end of his term, it will give you a total of 50 culverts in the rural areas.

THE SPEAKER: You have exhausted your time.

HON. DANIEL FORNAH: Mr Speaker, I thank you very much for this opportunity *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to Honourable Sylvester Boima.

HON. RTD CAPT SYLVESTER BOIMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to clarify the closure of the S.L.P.M.B. My

name is Honourable Sylvester Boima from Moyamba District Cluster 98 Kori, Kamajai and Kowa. S.L.P.M.B according to history was closed in January 1992 when Joseph Saidu Momoh was President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will refer you to page [29] Paragraph [104] where the issue about increase in Wage Bill is talked about. There is need for the wage Bill to be increased why? Because the Government of Sierra Leone is a responsible Government; we need to employ people and these people need to be paid, and if that is so, there is need for the Wage Bill to be increased. So there is no need talking about 5% tax increment by Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give you a base-line for the need of 5% tax increase; it is neither new in this country nor in West Africa, Nigeria has 50% tariff tax on rice, 10 – 20% within other countries like Benin, to name but a few. Mr Speaker, I will refer you to the theme for 2017 in the economic financial statement as presented: Recovery through economic diversification and fostering entrepreneurship; that was the theme for 2017. I am now making analysis; for 2024 it says: Restoring Micro- Economic Stability while protecting the poor and the vulnerable. Remember, that recovery here is telling you about processes of regaining stolen things; they stole money, and that is why the then Minister said 'recovery', you can goggle to see the exact meaning of 'recovery'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me inform my Colleague brother from that side; that this Government is a listening Government, we can know where your problem lies, let us see what we can do but remember, that this Government said it is going to adhere to the 15% payment of salaries for teachers; and also going to employ 2,000 [two thousand] teachers. We have teachers from TC to HTC, what will happen? They are going to reassess them so that they can match up with current trend. This Government also is going to employ 700 [seven hundred] Military Personnel.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, moving further, this Government is going to employ 500 [Five hundred staff] for Tertiary Institutions before then, the University used to pay themselves, but I want to tell you that as of now, 85% of their salaries is being paid

from the Consolidated Revenue Fund operated by the Central Government. This Government is going to employ 2,000 [two thousand] health workers; if for any reason, you have all of these plans set up, where do you expect the government to source the money to pay them? If you employ people, you have to pay them. Remember, in order not to bother yourself with the detail analysis in the budget, you have the financial strategy statement prepared by the Minister.

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. RTD CAPT SYLVESTER BOIMA: On that note Mr Speaker, I want to tell you that the A.P.C. [Opposition Party], are the rice importers in this country. They do not mean well for this country, they are supporting their brothers. My Colleague brothers, let us put our hands together to see how speedily we can approve this welfare budget for the people; thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Jawah Sesay.

HON. JAWAH SESAY: I thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker it is so sad to call your son the wrong name 'Java'.

THE SPEAKER: No hold on! If I have mispronounced your name, kindly give me the correct pronunciation because what is written here is what I have pronounced.

THE SPEAKER: JAWAH: Is that Jawah?

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Yes Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker my name is Jawah Sesay representing the people of Tonkolili District, specifically Sambaya Chiefdom, Dansawaya Chiefdom and Kanladugba Chiefdom.

THE SPEAKER: Let not spend much time on this go on please.

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Mr Speaker, the APC Party has never submitted a failed President. Honourable Members, you and I can testify that from the days of Siaka P. Stevens, President Momoh, Ernest Bai Koroma, we have pointers in this country. Mr Speaker except otherwise but today if we can now boast of Dr Abass Bundu in this

Parliament I think is the days of Siaka Steven. You were part of them, you were part of that Government and we praise you a lot.

THE SPEAKER: That is indisputable I have never challenged that.

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Very good.

THE SPEAKER: The record speaks for itself.

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Mr Speaker, as I initially said I am representing the people of Sambaya, Dansawaya and Kanladugba Chiefdoms that area is the hub of Sierra Leone national revenue we know exactly what these three Chiefdoms are contributing towards the national revenue of this country. Mr Speaker, the road moving from Magburka, Bubuna, Dasogoya as well as Samaya Bendugu the road is so deplorable Madam Minister, not to talk about the road leading to Kalatunya Chiefdom is also deplorable.

Mr Speaker, we are suffering so much in that area I could remember in 2018 His Excellency went as far as the Chiefdom where I came from specifically he saw the road, he saw the problems of our people and again in 2022 during my own bye elections he went there again and he promised them. In the 2021, 2022, 2023 budgets we have never received any benefit from this Government. This is a call to concern that is why I called this budget a budget of confusion. Madam Minister is it a crime to have minerals in our place? Why do we have bad roads? Why we don't have good health centres? These are questions for you Madam Minister.

THE SPEAKER: And on that note...

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Mr Speaker, the people of Kalatumba are not happy with this Government for this reason because they have conducted elections in the surrounding Chiefdoms. They have done it in other areas but when it comes to Kalatumba Chiefdom their own case is different and you will never know the important of that Mr Speaker. On that note Mr Speaker, I thank you very much but let us give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar. Mr Speaker, let us give to Kulatumba what is due to Kulatumba what is right to them Mr Speaker. I thank you all.

THE SPEAKER: I can only take three more Members we have 15 minutes more to go; I now give the Floor to the Honourable Umu Pyne.

HON. UMU PYNE: I thank you very much Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to add my voice to this debate. I have heard Members on the other side talking about road which was their flagship program for two terms and then the last speaker you are getting money from the mines industries. What are you doing with those monies to develop your communities? I also heard of my brother from the same area talking about the public health unit and the ambulances I felt very pity for you my brother you are not grounded in health matters. I am a health professional and I am in the Health Committee we have worked very hard with the entire District that one is not new for us. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here to commend the Government and to thank the Ministry of Finance for your commitment to the Human Capital Development since 2018 because before 2018, education was nothing to write home about. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to extend my heartfelt appreciation to this Government for actually developing the education sector in this country. And I want to zoom it to Moyamba District where I came from we have 640 schools this Government has tried very hard to develop and improve five pre-schools with all modern facilities. 314 primary schools, 67 junior secondary schools, 22 senior secondary schools, 408 of those schools have been approved with teachers and 104 schools are benefiting from the school feeding program that is why I am thanking this Government. The investment in infrastructure is a tangible demonstration for the Government determination to create an environment where every child can benefit from what the Government is doing. Also, if we look at paragraph 31, I will commend the Ministry of Finance for the laudable intention behind the 20% allocation to the education system in the 2024 budget, education is the bed rock upon which we build a prosperous society just as John Dewey said, "education is not a preparation for life but life itself".

THE SPEAKER: You have half minute left.

HON. UMU PYNE: On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here to defend the Government's good intentions in promoting Human Capital Development,

the allocation to education and gender sector in the 2024 budget is a reflection of equality and overall wellbeing of our citizens. I therefore call on the other side to acknowledge and support this positive document to be the Bible and the Quran of this country. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I now give the Floor to the Honourable Aminata Sesay.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my name is Aminata Sesay I am representing Port Loko District, to be more specific Kamasundu and Lokomasama Chiefdoms. Honourable Members, I have been listening to all what you have said about this document, this document will be only important if you agree for us to make recommendations and look at it seriously otherwise I guarantee you by next week this document will be used to sell groundnut in the market. It will be of no use, so as much as everything is in there I assure you next year it will be the same document with the same promises with zero deliverance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we appreciate the Government we want them to do more for our people but one of the things that annoys me listening from the Debate from the other side is the way you are diminishing our people, you are blaming our people for being poor. I came from Farming home and farming should be one of the most lucrative areas in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we stand here and give recommendations we are not attacking President Julius Maada Bio but you are going on to attack Presidents that have diligently served this country for so many years. You are not here to protect your symbols neither your party you are here to speak for your people they are watching you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to increase tax on sugar is not good and reducing on alcohol that is not the way to go. My whole life I have worked in health facilities and before you introduce tax on health you first of all have to advertise and let the people know. You need to talk to the company that are producing this sugar and drink and negotiate with them how much they should reduce it that is the first thing you should

do. Don't tax the people yet you are reducing taxes on alcohol you are telling us is okay to drink alcohol instead of tea that is wrong. It is a false information and it is not worthy for any health department to go on with that. But let us go back to the Debate because you have allocated a huge sum for tertiary hospital thank you for doing so and I hope you would deliver and before coming to the tertiary hospitals, people need more community health centres where most times is where the care begins. So if that is the case we have to take those centres seriously. We need to build more and more of those centres for the time being because it is unrealistic to involve in an accident all the way Okra Hill and the only tertiary hospital is Connaught Hospital. If you are a medical person how long does that take you? You have zero chance of survival you might as well be laid down to die. It is of no use if the only tertiary hospital is all the way at Connaught Hospital when the accident and the high way is over forty miles away it is of no use. In medical any one second is considered an hour, every second in delivery care matters and the lives of our people matter and that is why we are recommending that before as much as we are building all these tertiary establishments they are beautiful but I can count all the hospitals you have opened this year if you go there now there are flies all over the place because the care is not given. But even more so building this tertiary hospital is beautiful what is not in these hospitals is the equipment to deliver the job. These hospitals are mere furniture like my house they are not doing the purpose they are set up to. Let us look at the equipment that should be in there and invest on the expertise and get us the machines to diagnose and treat patients properly otherwise you are fooling the nation by giving building you called them hospitals that are barely houses. So when we are talking about the budget we are not attacking President Julius Maada Bio we are talking about the future of our people and we are talking for those very people that elect you to be here who today you are asking them to go and farm. How many of you here are farmers or know about farming?

THE SPEAKER: On that note...

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how many of your children are involved in that farming? Many of you pay people to do it but you don't

actually farm so you are telling our people to go and farm as if they are not good enough to go into the universities that you are going to and go on to do other things they cannot all be farmers. Our parents were farmers but today they have produced Doctors and Lawyers. So on that note, I ask that we behave honourably like Honourable Members and speak for our people not for ourselves, individually we will be able to afford a bag of rice at any price even if it is a thousand Dollar I can afford it here but is not about me, is not about you either, is about the people you represent. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

HON. BENJAMIN TURAY: Thank you very much Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity again. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to tell Members on that side that they will keep being in opposition because they don't want to say the truth. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me first of all acknowledge the tremendous work done by His Excellency the President Dr Julius Maada Bio in the area of education, Energy, Agriculture and other sectors. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer to this budget as a budget for the poor and the development of this country. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, through the implementation of this budget in this country, Mr Speaker, it will help to promote the following developments in this country. One, the budget will address the 'feed salone' initiative in this country. Two, Mr Speaker, the budget will eradicate poverty in this country. Three, it will create more employments for our young people in this country and four; it will also reduce the cost of living for our people in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague on the other side yesterday he was talking about the water supply in the country but Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to assure this House that, as a responsible government water crisis will be no more problem in this country. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a Member of Parliament representing Western Urban District, through the support of His Excellency we have provided seventeen 'Milan' tanks of ten thousand litres in various communities in my District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also embarked in digging bore

holes through the support of the Office of the First Lady in various communities in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my friend on the other side was talking about road I do believe this Government is a responsible Government whatever we have promised we are going to do as 'talk and do' is our slogan. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government has accomplished so many roads in my District I meant the Western Urban District. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the few to mention are the Hill Station Regent Road, the Hill Cot Road, the Old School Road, and the Gbangba Yilla Road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government has done a lot in terms of education, most of my communities schools, secondary schools, and primary schools have been provided with computer lab for early studies. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want us as Honourable Members to believe in the process and to believe that this Government has the power and the capability to transform this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a government we have exposed this country to the world in terms of Tourism. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is under this government we have hundreds of Tourists to visit Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency for giving us a laudable budget with the implementation of this budget we will have a better nation. On that note, I want to thank you all very much Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as foreshadowed before at the very beginning of today's proceedings, we have come to the end as this was the time we agreed upon that we should bring today's Debate to a close. We would continue the Debate on Monday which will be the 5th and the last day of the Debate and that will be devoted almost entirely to the Leadership of the two parties and the substantive Minister of Finance will be given an opportunity to respond to the many concerns, questions, and issues that you have raised in the course of this Debate. Presently, he is out of the country but I am reliably informed that he will be back before Monday. We spared the MDA's with the list today I know you have it but let us spare them some of us who are

devour Muslims would want to say thanks to our maker before the time is over. We will actually come back to the MDA's on Monday before we start off the proceedings we would definitely do the roll call again. On that Understanding may I ask if we have any announcement? Madam Minister, thank you very much for your patience, endurance and understanding.

ANNOUNCEMENT

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Members of the Works Committee are invited to an emergency meeting immediately after sitting in my office. I thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

**MR SPEAKER ADJOURNED THE HOUSE TO MONDAY 27TH NOVEMBER, 2023
AT 10:A.M.**

THE HOUSE ROSE AT 1:10 PM.