

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

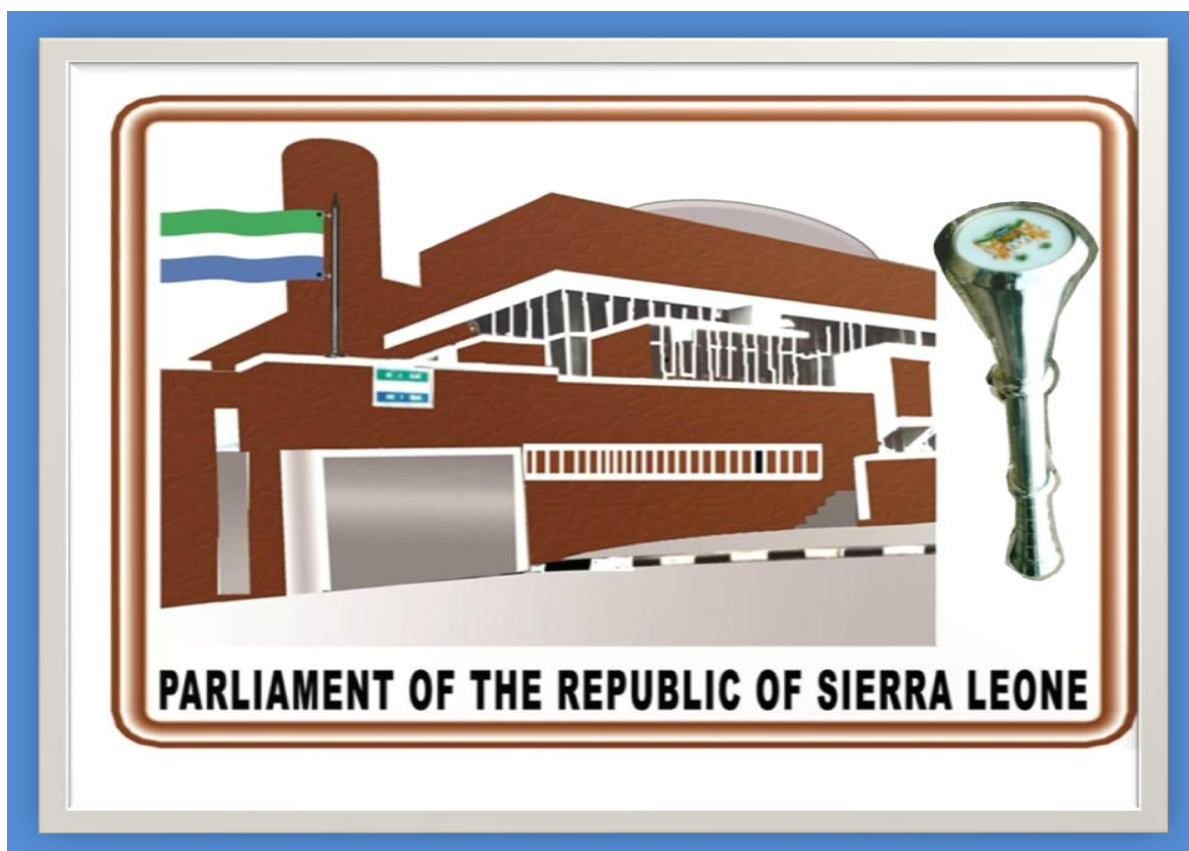
[HANSARD]

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION –SECOND MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 24<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2025**

*SESSION – 2024/2025*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

---

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 43**

---

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held on Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2025.

---

## **CONTENTS**

### **I. PRAYERS**

### **II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2025**

### **III . ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR. SPEAKER**

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

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

- SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER AND THE OTHER ELECTORAL COMMISSIONERS OF THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION FOR SIERRA LEONE [ECSL] REGULATION, 2025.
- THE WAGES AND COMPENSATION ACT, 2023 [ACT NO. 19 OF 2023].
- STATUTORY INSTRUMENT NO. 3 OF 2025.

### **V. GOVERNMENT MOTION**

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

[I] COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE.

[II] MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE.

### **VI. BILL:**

THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL ACT, 2025

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE



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

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

---

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

---

**Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2025.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

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

*[The House met at 10:05 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

*[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh S. Thomas in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of S.O 5[2]*

**II. CONSIDERATION OF THE RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2025**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025. As usual, we shall skip Pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5? Do you have any correction or amendment to make on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? If there is no amendment, can a Member move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 as presented?

**HON. ABDUL BANGURA:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH.** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 has been adopted as presented]*

**III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER**

**THE SPEAKER:** please proceed, there is no announcement.

**IV. PAPERS LAID**

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

**MADAM KADIATU ALLIE** *[Deputy Minister of Finance 1]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following Papers:

- Salaries and conditions of service of the Chief Electoral Commissioner and the other Electoral Commissioners of the Electoral Commission for Sierra Leone [ECSL] Regulation, 2025.
- The Wages and Compensation Act, 2023 [Act No. 19 of 2023].
- Statutory Instrument No. 3 of 2025.

**V. GOVERNMENT MOTION**

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**MADAM FRANCESSE PIAGIE ALGHALI [*Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation*]:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024:

[i] Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

[ii] Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here before this Honourable House to request for the ratification of the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone. The government of Sierra Leone and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed a Cooperation Agreement on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2023 in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This Cooperation Agreement between the two countries is crucial for fostering positive bilateral relations in promoting shared interest in various sectors and investments cooperation between the two friendly countries. This Agreement covers cooperation in various economic fields, including industry, petroleum, mineral resources, petrochemicals, agriculture, livestock, tourism and health projects. As such, Sierra Leone stands to benefit after the ratification of the Cooperation Agreement with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Cooperation Agreement signals commitments to further scale up bilateral ties and will contribute to bolstering our long standing partnership and diplomatic relations based on mutual respect and mutual understanding. This Cooperation Agreement, if ratified by this Honourable House, would facilitate and potentially boost trade and investments, leading to economic growth and developments for both countries. The Cooperation Agreement will encourage cooperation in the fields of culture, sports and youth affairs through coordination in international forum, exchange of programmes between sports and our Agric-institutions, as well as exchange of visits and expertise between officials in charge of our youth and sports affairs. The Agreements will also encourage cooperation in education and trainings, leading to the development of our human capital. We also stand to benefit from advanced research institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The ratification of this Cooperation Agreement will promote cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in science and technology, leading to advanced mental innovations in Sierra Leone. This will also facilitate the exchange of information in the

areas of mutual interest and information relating to scientific and technological research, training of researchers, participation in scientific symposia and conferences of mutual interest.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation of Sierra Leone that was signed between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone was laid for the information of this noble House. This memorandum aids to establish, improve and strengthen bilateral and multilateral engagements and cooperation between the two ministries. The MoU will create a platform for consultations on multilateral and bilateral issues of mutual interest, and will serve as a platform for the periodic review of progress in the implementation of our bilateral cooperation.

In conclusion, this mutually beneficial document will help to reinforce our nation's commitments to our bilateral partner in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, while at the same time promote our national developments interest. I therefore call on every Member of Parliament to support this Cooperation Agreement, as well as to note the signing of the MoU on political consultations between the two countries in the spirit of national interest and bilateral cooperation. May our decisions here today serve the best interest of our beloved nation. Therefore, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2024:

[i] Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

[ii] Memorandum of Understanding on Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, let me at this stage inform you that we have a laying out ceremony of the late Honourable Zainab Kamara. She is deceased and the laying out ceremony will be at 1:00 p.m. I therefore urge all of you to please be in attendance. This is our House and she was one of us. The family members will bring the body here. Let us not forget that we are all Members of Parliament and we have our days to live on this Earth; and when we eventually leave, we will be brought to this House and laid here. We expect Members of Parliament to be in attendance. I urge you

all to ensure that we give her the final respect. Incidentally, she was the wife of a former Clerk of this House. Let us give her the last respect.

Furthermore, we need to hurry up with this sitting, so that all of us can be in attendance in that ceremony. Of course, we have a meeting in Committee Room 1 for all Members of Parliament. Members of Parliament are highly educated people and I would like to inform you that my office is open to every Member of Parliament. If you have any doubt about any information, I have told you before this time that you are free to come and ask questions. I have got too much misinformation regarding the finances of Parliament. Therefore, I urge you all to go to Committee Room 1 immediately sittings are adjourned, so that the Finance Department will properly inform us about what is going on. In fact, I have nothing to do with the parliamentary finances. What I usually insist on is to ensure that before moneys are withdrawn from the parliamentary coffers, I should be informed. If there is miscalculation relating to entitlements, please ask the Finance Department for relevant information. Immediately after this sitting, we are going to Committee Room 1 for proper information from the Department of Finance, so that we know exactly what is happening.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and welcome back after a long break. As it was said earlier, we need to make this particular sitting very brief. I have gone through the MoU and Cooperation Agreement; and indeed, there is nothing controversial in these documents. These are documents the government is seeking to strengthening friendship and relationship between two equals. Mostly, when they talk about MoU, it is a document that contains mutual interest between two equals. However, they all have their own rights in the interest of mutual benefits; they have different procedures and this is exactly what is happening here. The Agreement is between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Sierra Leone. One of the areas for mutual interest has to do with the economy, which includes trade, investments, science, technology, policy, culture, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one thing that has bothered me the most is that since I became an adult some years back, I have not seen many Agreements between Sierra Leone and Saudi Arabia. I believe we have a lot to share with Saudi Arabia and we have a lot to benefit from them. With this initiative, I am here to support the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to also encourage him to bring more Agreements that have to do with the two countries. We have no reason to object these Agreements. There are, however, some technical areas which should serve as advice to us. As indicated in Article 3[1], for instance, it allows each party to undertake investments, except areas excluded by our respective national laws. They have their reasons for inserting that provision and we also need to learn from it. This is because we have seen



situations in Sierra Leone wherein foreign companies almost get everything without exceptions; thereby leaving our local industries and investors stranded. They too have the capacity to invest in some of these areas, but we give the foreign companies everything.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even in the area of defence, contracts are being awarded to foreign companies to procure arms, build our ammunition centers and give technical advice. I am sure that makes a lot of sense to us. When entering into an Agreement with countries of equals, there is always the need to exclude certain areas and reserve same for local investors or for our own people. Sometimes we overlook the usefulness of our local industries, but they are aware of the funds paid to foreign companies and certain percentages they reserve for their own people abroad. This is stated in Article 3[1] of the Agreement. Some of these investments that have to do with trade laws are based on their own investment laws and maybe some of those laws have exceptions. For instance, you can invest in certain areas, but when it comes to other areas, such as Iron Ore, you cannot. I challenge you that without exclusions, I am afraid because even if we may want to invest in their Mining Industry, I doubt if they will accept it. However, when they come to invest in our mining sector, we give them everything. We need to think about that very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Article 7 states that in addition to this Memorandum of Understanding and the Cooperation Agreement, any area each country wishes to invest in, for instance, if Sierra Leone wishes to invest in Agriculture in Saudi Arabia and for that investment to be implemented in their country or for their investment in mining industry to be implemented in Sierra Leone, there should be a separate Agreement. If for mutual interest we have agreed to invest in Agriculture and for such Agreement to be implemented, there should be a separate Agreement to be ratified again by their Parliament. If they wish to invest in the Iron Ore Industry and for that to be implemented in Sierra Leone, there should be a separate Agreement to be ratified again by this House. I think that is fair enough because we will not be caught up like what we already have in other Agreements. I am sure the separate Agreement will inform us better during the approval process as to whether we should approve it or not. We can even ensure proper monitoring of the implementation of those separate Agreements. When these separate Agreements are being implemented, let us say in the area of tourism, they should be monitored. I would like to encourage the Minister and team to monitor the implementation of Agreements that are brought before this House. If you have agreed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia should invest in tourism, you have to get a separate Agreement and it must include monitoring provisions, otherwise it would not be ratified.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one interesting thing is that this Cooperation Agreement is for a period of five years, subject to renewal for one year, as and when it pleases each of the party because it does not want to bring down this Cooperation Agreement. We can have the option to do so for another one year successively after the first five years. I think that is fair enough because it gives us more laxity to back out in the event we notice that this Cooperation Agreement is not beneficial to the people of this country. It gives us the opportunity to withdraw. The only provision is that you need to give six months notice prior to your withdrawal or your intention to terminate the Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to refer you to Article 9[4] of the Agreement. It says that whenever there is dispute under this Cooperation Agreement, it shall be resolved through negotiations and settlements. At first, I was scared, but I later had a second thought considering the complexity of human beings and the potential conflicts of interest that may arise. For these two countries, when there are disputes, they could be resolved through negotiations and settlements. What if in the event negotiations fail as seen in many Agreements? Most times negotiations fail during the course of settling disputes. However, I came to understand that this one did not apply to the Agreement under Article 7. So, Agreement under Article 7 will further ensure the implementation of this Cooperation Agreement. For better implementation, if Sierra Leone or Saudi Arabia agrees on specific areas of investments, there has to be another Agreement to be ratified by this House. In the event disputes cannot be settled, there must be a provision for the intervention of the court. This means you cannot withdraw or break down the jurisdiction of any courts in terms of settlements. By procedure, the court should have the final say in terms of the laws that should apply in the event of arbitrations, settlements or negotiations fail. Nevertheless, I am a bit comfortable that this Cooperation Agreement does not leave any loopholes. If, for instance, we take Agriculture and they take the mining sector, there have to be separate Agreements and it must be binding on both parties. The resolution mechanisms would have to be stated very clearly and they should include the jurisdiction of the Court based on existing laws. I believe this is just an overview of the Agreement. When we come to the real Agreement[s] or implementation of this Cooperation Agreement, whatever items we are going to agree on, it has to be a separate Agreement which will have to be brought to this House for ratification. I cannot wait to see one or two of those Agreements and I will not tell the Minister to make a promise now, but my wish is to see one or two Agreements in this House before the end of this Session.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I urge my colleagues to speedily ratify these Agreements, so as to enable us receive more Agreements from Saudi Arabia. We need them and they also need us. Thank you very much.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thanks to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition for making it explicit in explaining the details of this Agreement, starting from Article 1 to Article 9 of the Agreement, targeting the local governance structure of President Bio; vis-à-vis education, mutual cooperation and fostering economic cooperation. These are clearly stated in this Agreement. Sometimes when we sit and discuss certain issues, the veracity is to strengthen what we call bilateral relationships. That is the cornerstone. In the Agreement, they have arrived at a consensus that they did not make litigation, but in the event there are disputes, they will resolve them through negotiations and consultations. I want to perfectly agree with you that there are certain Agreements that seek for litigations and they also ask for certain amount as compensation. However, in this Agreement, it is stated that in the event one or both parties want to withdraw, six months notice must be given and that is the intent and spirit of the Agreement. In addition, the Agreement could be renewed after five years. The renewal period is one year if it is accepted by both parties.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you looked at mineral exploration, which is stated in Article 5, especially the one that has to do with technology, you should have some mutual Agreement to deal with that particular investment. The preamble of this Agreement talks about cooperation on agriculture, education, science, trade tourism, etc. We are saying that if I want to invest in institutions that deal with the youth, I need to have a separate Cooperation Agreement. This Agreement is forming the framework for future cooperation of bilateral Agreements between the two countries. I have read the Agreement regarding the Youth Commission of Saudi Arabia, which is based on applicable laws and that is the provision they have given to us. However, there is also a component we need to pay attention to and that has to do with the Parliamentary Committee on Trade, which is also mentioned in Article 8. The Trade Committee will have to give effect or add value to this Agreement. The Agreement makes provision for its full implementation as provided for by Section 40[4] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991. It is also stated in Article 9 of this Agreement that it can only come into effect after its ratification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Article 8 is asking us to establish a Joint Committee in order to ensure the full implementation of this Agreement. Madam Minister, all of us know that ratifying the Agreement is not an issue, but ensuring its full implementation. I do not want to talk about the difficulties relating to the ratification of this document. I know that there are issues from both Parliaments and/or the Ministries of Foreign Affairs. The Minister is the right person who channeled this Agreement. You have served as Registrar in renowned institutions in this country and your husband has also done same. This means you have contributed immensely to the educational aspect of this country. In streamlining, what we need to do is to ensure complete implementation

of this Agreement. Article 5 is very clear regarding trainings for technicians. This Agreement also makes reference to science and when they came to discuss about science, they referred to specific areas, such as research. They also mentioned petroleum or petrochemicals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister will agree with me that educational science is written deliberately, but they now use separate entities in trying to classify them in Article 5. Under your administration, we are looking forward to the full implementation of this Agreement. We are talking about education for the people of this country in line with bilateral cooperation between Sierra Leone and Saudi Arabia. With regard to technological advancement, they are far ahead of us and it is a very strong country with not less than eight million people. They have agreed and we have accepted to enter into Cooperation Agreement with them. We are talking about exchange of ideas through visitations, especially the institutions that deal with the youths. These are things we are going to deal with precisely. I perfectly agree with Honourable Daniel Koroma when he explicitly stated the issues we need to address before enforcing this Agreement. However, we do not have the same laws because we do not have Sharia Laws in our country, but they do. That is why they mentioned the phrase, 'on applicable laws.' The Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition also said that bringing those mutual Agreements will clearly explain to us whether they are in tune with our domestic laws.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the Minister and team have done extremely well in bringing this Agreement for ratification and it can be demonstrated in the interest of Sierra Leone. The Opposition Deputy Leader [I] spoke about the local content and that is why he also said that we should not, for example, look at what we can afford and what we think we have achieved. If you come to invest in agriculture, where we are talking about livestock, you have to first of all look at the available storage facility, which is the local content and that was perfectly explained. There is however one thing he mentioned in Article 6, which has to do with 'secrecy.' There is no way they are going to divulge information to a third party without the written consent of the other party. Let us note that these are some of the difficulties and disputes if secrecy is not maintained.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to Article 4 of this Agreement. We used to have exhibition because we wanted to showcase what we have developed to and what others would bring on board. The only way you can have Sierra Leoneans and people from Saudi Arabia is to see what you have developed as Sierra Leoneans. In fact, the Agreement promotes economic activities and bilateral cooperation. Sierra Leone is not an advanced country as compared to Saudi Arabia in terms of technology,

but we can do it as well. We are able to distribute our own local items; the same with Saudi Arabia in terms of iron ore production and petrochemicals. You can showcase what you have through exhibition. This attracts people who are yearning for technology and they would like to see the promotion of technology. What is key in Article 4 is the Private Sector. The Private Sector is included because President Bio said in this Well that we should go for policies that geared towards supporting the Private Sector and also embracing other entities. For example, we talk about investing in tourism. Tourism is also part of what we call 'create image entity.' It is a whole sector under tourism. It is a religious kind of tourism; therefore, bringing the Private Sector will help to contribute to the socio-economic development of this country. Article 4 is very specific with regard to the Private Sector. They are very important and that is why the President always mentions it in his annual Speech to Parliament. I want the Minister to take note of this very seriously. Parliament only performs oversight and we cannot go beyond our duties and obligations. You are however going to be in charge as a Minister. I know they are going to form the Joint Committee because that was why they have asked for its formation. Those who are going to form this Joint Committee should highly consider the Private Sector investments and cooperation. These are key and they stand to benefit the interest of our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me draw your attention to Article 2. It says: "Contracting parties shall promote, expand and diversify their trade relations in accordance with international trade systems." Madam Minister, I am sure we all know what is happening now in the world. This Agreement has to do with trade and it is specific in Article 2. I read it out because of the present circumstance we are going through and that has to do with the trade war. We are encountering high tariffs because individual countries are now levying taxes against one another. We cannot see ourselves between giant fighters. What we can do now is to put in place policies and enforce bilateral Agreements with advanced countries like Saudi Arabia. So, for the one that has to do with trade, people are bastardising international laws. We cannot bastardise them because we do not have the means to challenge any of these countries. What we do is to cooperate with them, like what we are doing now. We have to implement policies on how to divert tariffs that are coming into the country and that will serve as a platform to build other bilateral relations with other countries. What is happening now in advanced countries is the fact that because of the huge arrears between small and giant countries that are in charge of production, export and import, their countries are now going for bilateral agreements. For instance, China is now going into bilateral arrangement with other countries. European countries are now going to America for bilateral agreements. This is exactly what is operating in the world today. So, America is seeking their interest; they are saying that they have the market and

people should go there and invest, not to export their goods out of America. It is about personal interest. What we are doing now is for us to seize this opportunity and promote our own bilateral agreement, so that we can benefit from trade, tourism, education, etc. I thank you very much and your team for putting this Agreement together. I also thank the Deputy Leader [1] of Opposition for highlighting some of the key areas in this Agreement.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Mr Leader of Government Business. Madam Minister, let us hear from you regarding the issues raised.

**MADAM FRANCES PIAGIE ALGHALI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We note the admonition of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition regarding monitoring the implementation of this Agreement. I want to assure this Honourable House that we will take active steps to ensure that the implementation of this Agreement is adequately monitored. We also know the recommendations that will emanate from this framework Agreement and we will incorporate a monitoring and evaluation sections to ensure that we monitor this Agreement adequately and effectively. We also note the admonition for the commission of the Joint Cooperation Committee, which is a matter of priority for the implementation of this Agreement. I want to assure this Honourable House that we will incorporate all the relevant agencies and ministries that will be responsible for the effective implementation of this Agreement. We will try to establish a framework of reporting at least to this Honourable House, clearly showing how this Agreement is going to be implemented.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also note an important aspect of this Agreement, which has to do with education and research. This aspect has to do with technology and the training of technicians, and we will ensure that this aspect of the Agreement is properly implemented. I also want to note the oath of secrecy that has been incorporated into this Agreement and that has to do with preserving the privacy rights that might emanate from the implementation of this Agreement. We do not want a situation wherein when we commence the implementation of this Agreement, some Sierra Leoneans or Saudi Arabians holding the intellectual property to reveal any information to third parties. So, I think that is why the oath of secrecy was incorporated into this Agreement. We also note the conditions relating to export, promotion and exhibition. We want to assure this Honourable House that we will collaborate with the relevant agencies which will form part of the Joint Implementation Committee, particularly the National Investments Board that has been approved by this House. It will become a key part of one of the agencies that will be involved in the Joint Commission Committee to implement this Agreement.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2024:

[i] Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

[ii] Memorandum of understanding on Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Government Motion by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has been ratified]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Madam Minister. Honourable Members, like I said, we have the laying out ceremony for the late Honourable Member by 1:00 p.m. and we also have a meeting before that ceremony. I have spoken with the Leaders and they have advised that we look at the Legislative Committee's report. We should allow the Chairman of that Committee to read the report and adjourn instead of coming here again.

## **V. BILL:**

THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL ACT, 2025

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL WELFARE

[THE HOUSE RESOLVES INTO COMMITTEE]

**EIGHTH REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE, SECOND SESSION OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, ON THE BILL ENTITLED "THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL ACT, 2025" PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT ON TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025.**

**HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH:** Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I present to you the Eighth Report of the Legislative Committee of the Second Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone on the Bill entitled, 'The Professional Social Workers Regulatory Council Act, 2025, presented to Parliament on Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### *i. Introduction*

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Bill having gone through the Second Reading and was committed to the Legislative Committee for scrutiny pursuant to **Standing Orders 51(1)**. Subsequently the Committee met on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2025, in Committee Room No.1 of Parliament Building, with the following objectives:

- To scrutinise in detail the principles and provisions of the bill and to make amendments if necessary.
- To ascertain the constitutional and legal implications contained therein.
- To report to Plenary for consideration by the Committee of the Whole House in line with S.O.53.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, in attendance were, the Minister and Officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Representative from the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], and representative from the Ministry of Justice, the Chairman Legislative Committee, Members of the Legislative Committee and other Members of Parliament.

### *ii. Recommendations*

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Legislative Committee having scrutinised the Bill line by line and clause by clause, recommends the following amendments to the House for approval:

**The Short Title-** be amended to read **"The Professional Social Work Regulatory Act, 2025.**

**The Long Title of the Bill-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"Social workers"** after the word **"professional"** and before the word **"Regulatory"** with the word **"Social work"** and replacing the phrase **"with the responsibility of regulatory"** with the phrase **"to provide for the regulation of"** to now read, "Being an Act to make provision for the establishment of the Professional Social Work Regulatory Council, to provide for the regulation of professional Social Workers, Social Work Facilities, Organisations and Institutions in Sierra Leone, including licensing, registration and discipline and to provide for other related matters."



## **PART I – PRELIMINARY:**

- 1. Clause 1 Interpretation** - the definition of the phrase **"Appeals Committee"** be amended by replacing the figure **"28"** with figure **"31"** to now read, "means a Committee appointed by the Minister under Section 31, for the purpose of hearing appeals made by an aggrieved social worker, social work facility, organisation or institution against a decision of the disciplinary Committee or the council."
- 2. Clause 1 Interpretation** - the definition of the phrase **"basic social work qualification"** be amended by removing the word **"basic"** in the title and deleting the phrase **"or related field of study"** before the word **"from"** and after the word **"work"** to now read "Social work qualification means a degree, diploma or certificate in social work from a recognized university, college or institution of higher learning approved by the council."
- 3. Clause 1 Interpretation-** be amended by inserting a new definition to read "Client- means individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities receiving social work intervention and/or services."
- 4. Clause 1 Interpretation** - the definition of the word **"Council"** be amended by replacing the phrase **"Social workers"** with the phrase **"Social work"** to now read "Council means the Professional Social Work Regulatory Council established under subsection [1] of section [2]."
- 5. Clause 1 Interpretation-** be amended by inserting a new definition to read, **"Licensed Social Worker-** means a registered Social Worker who has gone through the necessary education as approved by the Council and is admitted and enrolled by the Council to practice as a Social Worker as may be determined by The Council."
- 6. Clause 1, Interpretation** - the definition of the word **"Minister"** be amended by deleting the phrase **"for the time being"** and the phrase **"matters relating to"** to now read, "Minister- means the Minister responsible for Social Welfare and "Ministry" shall be construed accordingly.
- 7. Clause 1 Interpretation-** be amended by inserting a new definition to read **"Social Work-** means the profession concerned with assessing and meeting the needs of individuals, families, groups, communities and society as a whole. To enhance their wellbeing. The practice draws from the application of social work values, principles and skills to support people. It's a practice of promoting social welfare, enhancing individual and collective wellbeing and addressing social issues through assessment, intervention, empowerment, advocacy and support services. It encompasses the provision of social services, including protection, rehabilitation,

counselling, community development and policy engagement to individuals, families, groups and communities.

8. **Clause 1 Interpretation-** be amended by inserting a new definition to read, **"Social Worker-** means a person who is qualified, licensed and regulated, to be a social worker under this law and is registered in the Register of Social Workers.
9. **Clause 1 Interpretation-** be amended by inserting a new definition to read **"Social Worker Assistant-** means a registered social worker with at least six years' experience in social care and has undergone the necessary training in social work, has undergone the admission and enrollment processes as may be determined by council, and is to practice under the supervision of a licensed social worker."
10. **Clause 1 Interpretation -** the definition of the phrase **"Social work facility"** be amended by replacing the word **"Children"** with the phrase **"a child"** to now read **" Social work facility-** means a private or public community-based organization engaged in social work or social services delivery including a care centre or orphanage for a child at risk or for generally a vulnerable child, a care home for vulnerable persons and older people, a recovery centre or shelter for traumatised persons, persons with mental health conditions, victims or survivors of human trafficking, sexual and gender-based violence etc.
11. **Clause 1 Interpretation –** be amended by deleting the definition **"Vice Chairman"**

## **PART II- ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL.**

12. **PART II-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"Social workers"** with the phrase **"Social work" to now read "ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK REGULATORY COUNCIL."**
13. **CLAUSE 2 sub clause 1- Establishment of council-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"Social workers"** with the phrase **"Social work"** to now read "There is hereby established a body to be known as the Professional Social Work Regulatory Council."
14. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1- Membership of council-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"professional social worker practitioner"** with the phrase **"registered professional social worker"** and inserting the phrase **"Subject to the approval of parliament"** after the word **"Minister"** to now read "The membership of the Council shall consist of a Chairman who shall be a registered Professional Social Worker appointed by the President on the recommendation of

the Minister subject to the approval of parliament, and the following other members” -

15. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1- Membership of council-** be amended by deleting sub section “a” and subsection “b” now becomes “a”
16. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1[b] previous clause 1[c]- Membership of council-** be amended by replacing the phrase “**Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education**” with the phrase “**Ministry of Technical and Higher Education**” to now read “the Chief Education Officer, Ministry of Technical and Higher Education”
17. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1[e] (previous clause 1f)- Membership of council-** be amended by replacing the phrase “**the President, Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers**” with the phrase “two representatives who are registered Social Workers from the Sierra Leone Association of Social Workers”:
18. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1- Membership of council-** be amended by inserting a new “f” to read “two representatives from organizations working with vulnerable groups.”
19. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 1- Membership of council-** be amended by inserting a new “g” to read “The Registrar whom shall be the secretary to the Council with no voting right.
20. **CLAUSE 3 sub clause 2- be deleted.**
21. **CLAUSE 4 sub clause 2[d]- Tenure of members-** be amended by replacing the word “or” with a comma and inserting the phrase “**or sexual offence**” after the word “**dishonesty**” to now read “if he is convicted and sentenced for an offence involving fraud, dishonesty or sexual offence.”
22. **CLAUSE 5 sub clause 2- Meetings of Council-** be amended by inserting the word “and” after the word “**Council**” and deleting the phrase “**vice chairman shall preside and in the absence of the chairman and vice chairman**” to now read “the chairman shall preside at every meeting of the Council, and in his absence, the members present shall appoint one of their number to preside.”
23. **CLAUSE 5 sub clause 4- Meetings of Council-** be amended by replacing the figure “3” with the figure “5” to now read “The Chairman or, in his absence, the member appointed to act in his stead shall summon a special meeting within 5 days of his receipt of the notice referred to in Sub-section 3.
24. **CLAUSE 5 sub clause 5- Meetings of Council-** be amended by replacing the figure “4” with the figure “5” to now read “The quorum at any meeting of the Council shall be 5.

25. **CLAUSE 7 sub clause 1- Immunity of member of Council-** be amended by closing the gap between the words **"the"** and **"exercise"** on the last line.
26. **CLAUSE 8 – Remuneration of Members-** be amended by inserting two new sub clauses **"8[1] & 8[2]."**
27. **CLAUSE 8 sub clause 1 – Remuneration of Members-** now read "The Chairman of the Council shall be paid such remuneration, fees and allowances approved by the minister and shall be reimbursed by the Council for expenses incurred in connection with the discharge of their functions as the Council may, with the approval of the minister, determine."
28. **CLAUSE 8 sub clause 2 – Remuneration of Members-** now read "members appointed under paragraph a, b, c, d, e and f of sub section (1) of section 3 shall be paid sitting fees and shall be reimbursed by the Council for expenses incurred in connection with the discharge of their functions as the Council may, with the approval of the minister, determine."
29. **CLAUSE 9 – Filling of vacancies-** be amended by replacing the word **"Bill"** with the word **"Act"** and replacing the word **"Months"** with the word **"Meetings"** to now read "Where the Chairman or a member of the Council dies, resigns, or is removed from office subject to this Act or is absent for a continuous period exceeding 3 consecutive meetings, or is by reason of illness unable to perform the functions of his office for a continuous period of 3 consecutive meetings, in the case of."
30. **CLAUSE 10 sub clause 2- Committees of Council-** be amended by closing the gap between the words **"the"** and **"conduct"** on the third line.

### **PART III- FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

31. **CLAUSE 11 sub clause 1- Functions of the Council-** be amended by rephrasing the entire sentence to now read "The council shall be responsible for the regulation of; [a] Professional Social workers, [b] Social Work Assistant and [c] Professional Social Work in Sierra Leone."
32. **CLAUSE 11 sub clause 2b[i]- Functions of the Council-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"a register"** with the phrase **"an updated register"** to now read **"an updated register of professional social workers."**
33. **CLAUSE 11 sub clause 2b[ii]- Functions of the Council-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"a register"** with the phrase **"an updated register"** to now read **"an updated register of social work facilities, organisations and institutions in Sierra Leone."**

34. **CLAUSE 11 sub clause 2[j]- Functions of the Council-** be deleted and previous "k" becomes "j" and "l" becomes "k"

#### **PART IV- ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**

35. **CLAUSE 12 sub clause 3[b]- Registrar of Council-** be amended by replacing the phrase "holds a Master's degree in such discipline as may be approved by the council" with the phrase "holds a Bachelor's degree in social work with at least 10years of experience approved by the council."
36. **CLAUSE 13 sub clause [1]- Deputy Registrar -** be amended by inserting the phrase "that holds a bachelor's degree in social work with at least 5 years of experience" after the word "Registrar" and before the word "who" to now read "The Council shall have a Deputy Registrar that holds a bachelor's degree in social work with at least 5 years of experience who shall be appointed by the Council, on such terms and conditions as may be stated in his letter of appointment."
37. **CLAUSE 13 sub clause [2]- Deputy Registrar -** be amended by closing the gap between the words "under" and "this"

#### **PART V- FINANCIAL PROVISIONS**

38. **CLAUSE 16 sub clause [1]- Funds of Council -** be amended by inserting a new subsection "c" to read "Fees collected by the Council" and the previous "c" becomes "d."
39. **CLAUSE 16 sub clause 1[d] previous [c]- Funds of Council -** be amended by separating the words "to" and "time" on the first line.

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

#### **PART VI- REGISTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS**

40. **CLAUSE 20 sub clause 1[b]- Registration of professional social Workers-** be amended by inserting the phrase "as an individual," before the word "Sierra Leone" and inserting the phrase "such as [NGO's research institutions] etc." before the word "scheme" to now read, "a Temporary Professional Social Workers' Register, in which shall be recorded the names, addresses and other particulars of professional social workers registered in a jurisdiction other than Sierra Leone and are visiting Sierra Leone as an individual, under a scheme [such as NGOs, research institutions, etc.] or agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone to offer professional social work services, including teaching and research."

41. **CLAUSE 22 Sub-clause [a] – Qualification for registration as social work professionals-** be amended by replacing the word “council” with the phrase “appropriate body” to now read “has such qualifications as prescribed by the appropriate body.”
42. **CLAUSE 22 Sub-clause [b] – Qualification for registration as social work professional-** be amended by replacing the phrase “moral turpitude” with the phrase “sexual offence” to now read “is of good character and has not been convicted of an offence involving fraud, dishonesty or sexual offence;”
43. **CLAUSE 23 Sub-clause [2] – Application for registration as professional social worker-** be amended by inserting a new paragraph “d” to read “Declaration of Criminal Record [Police Clearance]” and the previous “d” becomes “e.”
44. **CLAUSE 23 Sub-clause 3 – Application for registration as professional social worker-** be amended to read “The Council may, if satisfied that the applicant possesses the relevant qualifications, approve the application and authorise: [a] the name, address, qualifications and the date of registration of the applicant to be entered in the Register and [b] the name, qualifications and the date of registration of the applicant published in the Gazette.

## **PART VII- REGISTRATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK FACILITIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**

45. **CLAUSE 26 sub clause 1[c] – Qualification for registration of social work facility, organization or institution-** be amended by closing the gap between the words “the” and “body” on the second line.
46. **CLAUSE 26 sub clause 3 – Qualification for registration of social work facility, organization or institution-** be amended to read “Where the Council if satisfied that the applicant possesses the relevant qualifications, it may authorise that the: [a] the name, address, qualifications and the date of registration of the applicant to be entered in the Register and [b] the name, qualifications and the date of registration of the applicant published in the Gazette.
47. **CLAUSE 26 sub clause 5 – Qualification for registration of social work facility, organization or institution-** be amended by replacing the phrase “Social worker” with the phrase “Social work’ and replacing the word “of” with the word “or” to now read “The registrar shall, where an application to register as a body as social work facility, or institution is.”

**48. PART VIII- REMOVAL, APPEAL REINSTATEMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKER, SOCIAL WORK FACILITY, ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION.**

**49. CLAUSE 27- SIDE NOTE** – be amended to read **“Removal of a professional Social Worker from Register.”**

**50. CLAUSE 27 sub clause 1- Removal of a professional social worker from register-** be amended by deleting the word **“social worker”** on the last line to now read **“The Registrar shall remove the names and other particulars of a professional social worker entered in the register under subsection [3] of section 20, one.”**

**51. CLAUSE 27 sub clause 3- Removal of a professional social worker from register-** be amended by replacing the phrase **“Certificate of registration”** with the phrase **“operating license”** to now read **“The deleted professional social worker whose name is removed from the Register under subsection [1] shall, within 14 days of the date of receipt of the notification of his removal surrender his operating license to the Council.”**

**52. CLAUSE 28 sub clause 1[a]- Removal of a professional social work facility, organization or institution from Register-** be amended by deleting the word **“Register”** from the line to now read **“has ceased operations;”**

**53. CLAUSE 30 sub clause 1- Appeals -** be amended by inserting a comma after the word **“social worker”**, delete the phrase **“to remove him”** on the third line, separating the words **“of”** and **“being”** and replacing the word **“his”** with the word **“the”** on the last line to now read **“ A deleted professional social worker, social work facility, organization or institution that is aggrieved by the decision of the Council may, within 30 days of being notified of the removal, appeal to an Appeals Committee.”**

**PART IX- SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS, FACILITIES, ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS TO BE LICENSED.**

**54. CLAUSE 33 sub clause 5[b]- Professional social work practicing license-** be amended by replacing the phrase **“2 years”** with the phrase **“1 year”** to now read **“be valid for a period of one year”**

**55. CLAUSE 34 sub clause 4[b]- Professional social work practicing license-** be amended by replacing the phrase **“2 years”** with the phrase **“1 year”** to now read **“be valid for a period of one year”**

- 56. CLAUSE 34 sub clause 5- Professional social work practicing license-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"Sub-section 0"** with the phrase **"Sub-section 1 of section 24"** to now read "Where the Council refuses an application under subsection 1 of Section 24, the Registrar shall give notice to the applicant of the decision of the Council, stating the reasons for the refusal."
- 57. CLAUSE 35 sub clause 1- Renewal of practicing license-** be amended by replacing the word **"certificate"** with the word **"license"** to now read "A registered professional social worker may apply to renew his practicing license."
- 58. CLAUSE 35 sub clause 2- Renewal of practicing license-** be amended by replacing the word **"certificate"** with the word **"license"** to now read "The provision on the application for a professional social work practising license shall apply to an application for renewal."

## **PART X- OFFENCES**

- 59. CLAUSE 37 sub clause 1-Misleading Representation-** be amended by replacing the letter subsection **"d"** with the letter **"c"**
- 60. CLAUSE 37 sub Clause 2[a]-Misleading Representation-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"minimum fine of le 3,000.00"** with the phrase **"fine not less than le 10,000.00"** and replacing the figure **"2"** with the figure **"6"** to now read "to a fine not less than Le. **10, 000.00** or to a term of imprisonment not less than 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment; and"
- 61. CLAUSE 37 sub-clause 2[b]-Misleading Representation-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"minimum fine of"** with the phrase **"fine not less than"** and replacing the capital letter **"E"** in the word **"Each"** with a small letter to now read "in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine not less than five hundred Leones [Le. 500.00] for each day during which the offence continues."
- 62. CLAUSE 38 -Misleading Representation-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"minimum fine of le 5,000.00"** with the phrase **"fine not less than le 25,000.00"** and replacing the figure **"6"** with the figure **"12"** to now read "commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine not less than of twenty-five thousand Leone [Le. **25, 000.00**] or to imprisonment of not less than twelve [12] months or to both such fine and imprisonment."
- 63. CLAUSE 39 sub clause 1E[i]- Offences relating to certificate-** be amended by replacing the phrase **"minimum fine of le 10,000.00"** with the phrase **"fine not less than le 25,000.00"** to now read "to a fine not less than



twenty five thousand Leones [**Le. 25, 000.00**] or to a term of imprisonment not less than 12 months or to both such fine and imprisonment; and"

- 64. CLAUSE 39 sub clause 1E[ii]-Offences relating to Certificate-** be amended by replacing the phrase "**minimum fine of le 10,000.00**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 1,000.00**", inserting the word "**other**" before the word "**every**" and deleting the phrases "**or part of a day**" and "**after conviction**" now read "in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine not less than one thousand Leones [**Le. 1,000.00**] for every other day during which the offence continues."
- 65. CLAUSE 40 sub clause 1d[i] -Falsely personating a professional social worker-** be amended by replacing the phrase "**minimum Le 5,000.00 fine**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 25,000.00**" and replacing the figure "**6**" with the figure "**12**" to now read "to a fine not less than of Le. **25, 000.00** or to a term of imprisonment not less than 12 months or to both such fine and imprisonment."
- 66. CLAUSE 40, Sub-clause 1d[ii]-Falsely personating a professional social worker-** be amended by replacing the phrase "**minimum fine of le 5,000.00**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 1,000.00**", to now read "in the case of a continuing offence, to a further fine not less than **Le 1,000.00** for each day during which the offence continues."
- 67. CLAUSE 41, sub-clause 1a[i] -General penalty -** be amended by replacing the phrase "**Le 5,000.00 minimum fine**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 25,000.00**" and separating the figure "**6**" from the word "**of**" to now read "to a fine not less than of Le. **5, 000.00** or to a term of imprisonment not less than 6 months or to both such fine and imprisonment."
- 68. CLAUSE 41, sub-clause 1a[ii]-General Penalty-** be amended by replacing the phrase "**Le 10,000.00 minimum fine**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 1,000.00**", inserting the word "**other**" before the word "**every**" and deleting the phrase "**or part of a day**" to now read, "for a continuing offence, to a fine not less than Le. **1,000.00** for every other day during which the offence continues."
- 69. CLAUSE 41, sub-clause 1b[i] -General penalty -** be amended by replacing the phrase "**Le 20,000.00 minimum fine**" with the phrase "**fine not less than le 20,000.00**" "to a fine not less than of Le. **20, 000.00**."

## **PART XI- MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS**

**70. CLAUSE 41, sub-clause 1 – Regulations** - be amended to read “The Minister may by statutory instrument in consultation with the council, make regulations for giving effect to this Act.”

**71. CLAUSE 41, Sub-clause 2- Regulations- be deleted.**

### *iii. Conclusion*

Mr Chairman, Hon. Members, the Legislative Committee, having scrutinized the Bill entitled, **THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL ACT, 2025** hereby recommend these proposals to the House for approval. The Report reflects the consensus of Honourable Members of the Committee. I therefore move that the House enact the Bill entitled, **THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS REGULATORY COUNCIL ACT, 2025** through Committee Stage and Third Reading into Law.

I thank you for your attention.

Signed:

.....

Hon. Abdul S. Marray Conteh

Chairman, Legislative Committee

[Second Session, 2024-2025]

[The House resumes]

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman of the Legislative Committee. Honourable Members, we will be having a delegation of Iranian Members of Parliament here, next week. They will be here in the Chamber as visitors on Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. In the circumstance, Honourable Members, I ask that we observe a moment of silence prayers for the late Honourable Member. Honourable Members, once again I invite you to Committee Room one immediately after sitting. A minute of silence was observed.

## ***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 12:27 a.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.]*