

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

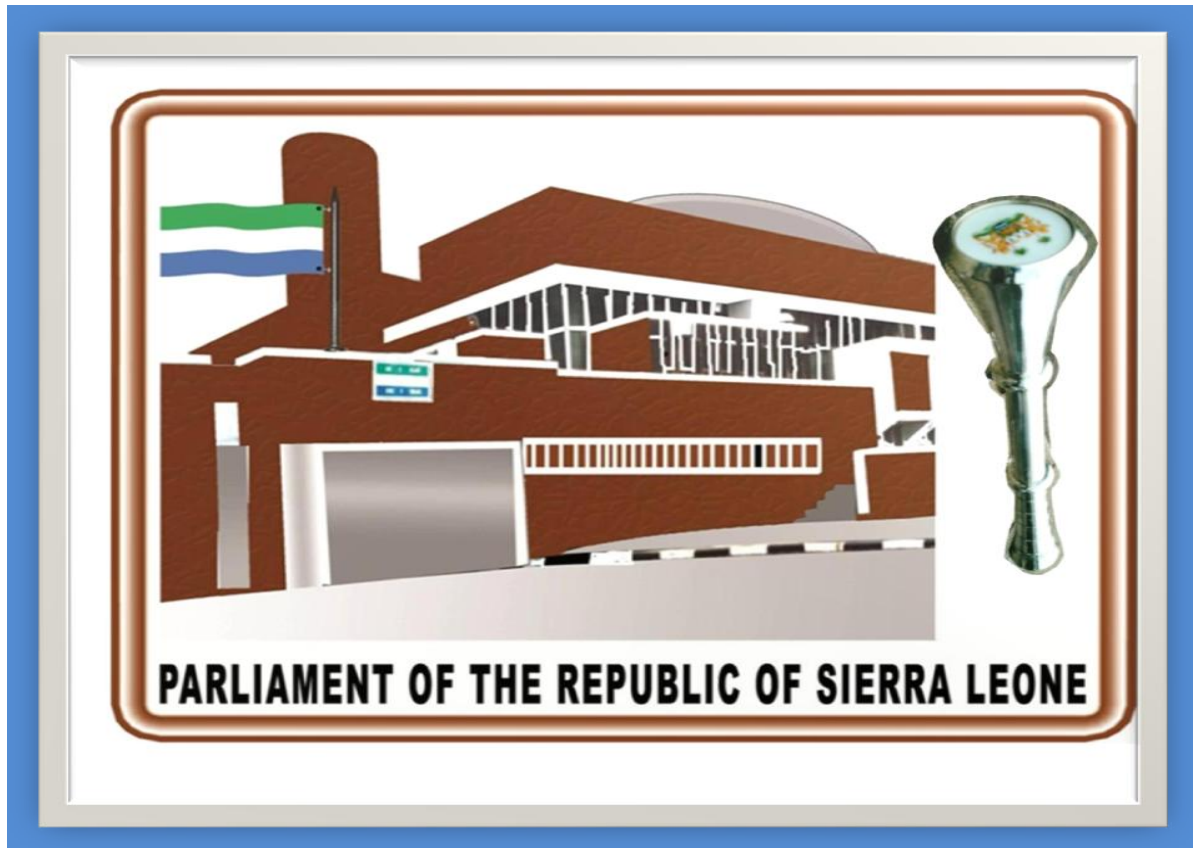
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION – SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 24TH JUNE 2025

SESSION – 2024/2025



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 54

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Tuesday, 24th June 2025

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INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE



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

TUESDAY, 24TH JUNE 2025

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Alimamy Lincoln Bangura, read the prayer]

[The House met at 10:06 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

II. CONSIDERATION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 10TH JUNE, 2025

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we now go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 10th June, 2025. As usual, we shall skip Pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Do you have any comment or observation to make on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? If there is no comment or observation, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 10th June, 2025 as presented?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MOHAMED KANNEH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the Parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 10th June, 2025 has been adopted as presented]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity to thank you for coming and let me assure you that we will be here in less than two hours. This is because our women have their Women's Convention tomorrow.

III. BILL

THE INVESTMENT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT [RATIFICATION] ACT, 2025.

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF JUSTICE

MR ALPHA SESAY *[Attorney General and Minister of Justice]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled 'The Investment Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 be read the first time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

The Bill entitled the Investment Framework Agreement Ratification Act, 2025 has been read the first time.

[SECOND READING]

MR ALPHA SEASAY ESQ.: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Investment Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 be read the second time. Mr Speaker, the Investment Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 being an Act to provide for the ratification of the Investment Framework Agreement and the development of the Sherbro Island, between the government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on one part, the Sherbro Island Alliance Partners Limited on the other part, and to provide for other related matters. The Investment Framework is divided into eight parts as follows:

Part one has to do with the preliminaries, such as the definitions and rules of interpretation, effectiveness, development zone, develop zone requirements, expansion of development framework and objectives of the development zone.

Part two deals with the Developmental Authority, which is a public/private partnership and establishes the Development Authority, provides for government revenue share and review mechanism which provides for the functions of Development Authority, powers of the Development Authority, governance framework of the Development Authority, establishment of Board of Directors of the Development Authority, powers and functions of the Board, powers and functions of the Chairperson, replacement of Board members, resignation of Board meetings, appointment and authority of Executive Officer or the Coordinator, jurisdictional and limitations of authorities and the development entity.

Part three deals with the Sherbro Community Trust, which establishes the Community Trust, composition of the Community Trust, functions of the Community Trust, land acquisition programme and community development.

Part four deals with the legal enabling environment, which provides for the legal enabling environment and the Law Committee.

Part five deals with the implementation, scope and purpose of the development programme, initiation of the development programme, modification of the development programme, immediate impact projects for Sherbro Island, feasibility assessment and implementation of immediate impact projects, coordination of ongoing initiatives in the development zone, evaluation and mitigation of ongoing initiatives, government commitments, government responsibility, protection from interference, import and export and work permits, concession rights and performance standards,

Part six deals with the investor protection which deals with changes in laws that lead to loss or damage, expropriation, fiscal regime, transfer of investments and proceeds, general investor protection principles and international investments Agreement.

Part seven deals with governing law and disputes resolution, governing law arbitration, waiver of immunity, gender of multiple parties and consolidation of disputes, force

majeure, default and termination, limitation of liability, confidentiality and public disclosure and award of claim.

Part eight deals with the miscellaneous provisions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on this note, I move that the Bill entitled 'the Investments Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025' be read the second time.

[Question Proposed]

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, what we have before us today is a very straightforward Bill. Investments and developments is what a country like Sierra Leone needs. It has already stated the areas that are going to be covered. Investments and developments with immediate impact under the concession rights covers entertainments, media production, media distribution, tourism and hospitality, claiming residential, real estate, agriculture, processes and trainings, natural resources, financial services, production and many more. For us to be part of the world's developments programme, I think this is where we should tell our story; and as representatives of the people, we are in a better position to make decisions that support national developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not think we have any time to waste on what we are supposed to do. We did it before and we already had a very clear understanding of how it is going to be done. What is going to be done is very clear, but how is it going to be done? Well, there is provision for the local content policy, wherein we have the Sherbro Community Trust, which we will take into consideration. We have to consider the community's interest and the legal enabling environment which is made up of the Law Committee and all the other issues that are going to be included. Also, the governing laws are going to be under the Sierra Leone laws. Arbitration is going to be in this law. In the miscellaneous provisions, we talk about revenue sharing and other things we need to consider.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not think we are short of information here, but maybe at some points, we are going to look at how it is going to be done. However, what is going to be done is very clear and I strongly believe that whatever decisions we are going to make, will be in the interest of the people. Thank you very much.

HON: JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 34. I want the Honourable Minister to tell us the object of this Bill. He has not done that and he needs to tell us, so that Members of Parliament are au fait with this Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please look at the back of your Bill and you will see the Memorandum of Object and Reason. You can read that to satisfy your curiosity. Thank you very much.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have before us a developmental Bill to deliberate on. Like what my colleague said, the content of this document is quite clear, but we also have to be mindful of what we are about to do. This Bill talks about various areas that have 32 miles long and 15 miles wide, with two hundred and thirty [230] square miles in terms of distance which consists of the main municipality. My question here is, do our people know the impact that is going to take place? This is because when once the development partners take the lead, the lifestyles of those people occupying those communities are going to be affected. Are they ready to accept such development? This is my humble submission to this House. Please, let us make sure that the people whose lives that are going to be affected by this particular Bill are sensitised. They should be sensitised, so that they will be able to accommodate whatever changes that are going to take place. This will enable us to meet the goal we want to achieve. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

HON. MOSES EDWIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, indeed this Bill is important, especially to the people of Bonthe District. We are the beneficiaries of this Bill. To allay the fears of how best the people are involved or how will they be involved in this kind of project, the main function of the Community Trust Fund is to liaise with the Development Authority. In fact, the composition of the Trust is made up of the Paramount Chiefs, the Mayor of Bonthe City and of course, Honourable Members of Parliament. There are many good things in this Bill and the Sherbro Alliance Partnership is going to act as a hub that will attract development by setting the infrastructure, so that investments will be ideal. I want to draw your attention to Clause 10[4A to E]. With your leave, it says:

- A. Threading, in order to allow local fishing trawlers to access the Sherbro Island.
- B. Construction of roads, traversing the Chiefdoms of the Sherbro Island.
- C. Rehabilitation of infrastructure of the Government school at Bembem that will service six Chiefdom communities on Sherbro Island and rehabilitation of infrastructure of two secondary schools located in Yonni Sittia Chiefdom and Chepo, Dema Chiefdom.
- D. Construction of two clinics in Yonni, Dema, Sanhaya, Sittia Chiefdom.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are laudable amenities for the people of Bonthe and Sherbro Island to benefit from. We have to appreciate them. There is also a provision in Clause 10[10], which has to do with protection from outside interference. This means that no government agencies may be allowed to slow down the work of the Trust. We have some government agencies that are lackadaisical in their operations and this Bill has captured it, so that there will be no infringement on whatsoever the

authority may want to do. I think, this is a great achievement for Sierra Leone. However, I want to implore the Sherbro Alliance Partnership to create the enabling environment to do the needful, so that the Island can regain its past glory. Mr Speaker, without much ado, I urge all my colleagues to speedily enact this Bill into law, so that the people of Bonthe District can start benefiting. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Members.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this particular Bill serves the purpose for which it is brought to this House. If you looked at the structure of Bonthe Island, you would realise that they are naturally structured as compared to other districts in Sierra Leone. This is because they are deprived of many other things the other districts of Sierra Leone have access to. When I looked at the Bill, I realised that it is good for the people of Bonthe District. It will make Bonthe Municipality autonomous, where the people will get what they desire without going outside. We all know that moving out of the municipality of Bonthe is tedious and this is why we should do everything possible to ensure that they have access to whatever they want without moving out of the municipality of Bonthe. It is a very good Bill and we have to make sure that the things that are captured in this Bill are achieved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have enacted many laws and we have also ratified many Agreements in this Well. However, you will also agree with me that most of these Agreements or laws we have enacted or ratified are not well monitored or implemented. If we monitored the implementation of these laws or Agreements effectively, we would have achieved a lot for the people of this country. I will tell you that what is missing is the aspect of compliance. We make very good laws as parliamentarians, but the enforcement of the provisions in these laws has been the problem. There are times even as we make these laws, it is necessary as Honourable Members of Parliament to checkmate the implementation of these laws. If you go through the content of this Bill from Chapter 1 to 3, you would realise that good things have been included, but how are they going to be achieved? Do you have community engagement with the people of Bonthe District?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was a staff of a Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO] before I became a politician. I was also a Police and Military Officer. Mr Speaker during the time I was working for the NGO, I realised that most of the communities we went to, they had structures that were not put into use and they were valuable structures. There were investments in those communities, but the people did not accept them at all. This was because those people were not consulted. So, inasmuch as this Bill is good, the question we should be asking is that were the people of the Municipality of Bonthe District consulted? Is this what they want? Well, from our own

viewpoint, yes, it is a good project for them because they are naturally deprived of many things. We should spread the development and decision making process to the lowest levels. We need the people to tell us what they want. I want to know if they were engaged; and if they were engaged and they made it clear that this is what they want, then it will create the desired impact; but if they were not engaged, it is going to be another white elephant project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, even though the Bill appears voluminous, I will say the fact here that we did not read this Bill because of the time it was brought to us. What is in our heads is politics, but again I took my time to briskly read through the concept and we all know the tollgate situation that happened. This is why I want to know if the investments we are about to undertake are already in existence. This is something that came to this House prior to this time and it was supposed to be an Agreement, but I realised that we are enacting a law that is binding on us as a country. Do we have this institution in existence? If yes, is it functional? I believe this is a laudable venture and I urge Honourable Members to speedily ratify this particular Bill, so that the people of Bonthe will start benefiting. I thank you.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I love Sierra Leone and I am proud to be a Sierra Leonean. This Bill is one of the beautiful Bills in this country. We have passed a lot of Bills into Laws, but if we compare them to this, I think this is one of the best. Our island is going to be an El Dorado of the region. If you close your eyes and imagine all what is mentioned in this Bill, you will say to the Minister and the stakeholders concerned to get to work immediately and make Sierra Leone another El Dorado. One thing I would like to remind them is that Sierra Leone is an attractive country. I want to tell the Minister that I would not like Sierra Leone to look like those dying in the Mediterranean Sea in search of greener pasture. It is going to be attractive because it is going to attract a lot of tourists. You would agree with me that where there are people, there are bad boys and good people at the same time. I hope and pray that this will be a successful venture. The Bill is good and it looks beautiful in our minds. Let us build Sierra Leone. Help us to do what we all have to make Sierra Leone a beautiful country. I want to thank His Excellency the President for this project; it is a great innovation for this country. God bless the Minister and team for such a wonderful work. I do not want to say much because my colleagues have hit the nail on the head. We are waiting to see you working. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honorable Fofanah!

HON. MUSA FOFANAH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to describe this Bill as a blessing for the people of Bonthe District. I also want to make reference to Part 3 of the Bill, where it talks about the composition of the Sherbro Community Trust.

Despite the permanent members, Clause 6 [2B] is talking about Members in the Sherbro Island who are not permanent members, who are appointed by the President for a period of five years and shall be eligible for reappointment. This is very critical because if you looked at the functions of this Board, it has a huge responsibility. This is because when you look at five years down the line, when the project should start or maybe start to raise revenue, we are hopeful as a country to benefit **5%**. I want this Trust to understand that government has been making a lot of progress for the Sherbro Island. You would agree with me that the sea front has been under construction before now and the Bendu Cha Connectivity has been commissioned and the Yagoi Jetty is almost completed. So, this has showed that the government has demonstrated leadership and commitments in the development of the Bonthe Island. I am sure our brother, Mr Elba and team are behind these investments. I am certain that **100%** of the investments are Sierra Leonean investments and this is a blessing in disguise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you looked at the water facility Bonthe is currently using, it is a unique opportunity for this country because it is only Bonthe that is using that kind of system to purify salt water into pure water for drinking. It is because of the kind of equipment they are using. This Bill is talking a lot about water or sea waves and the kind of infrastructure they want to construct. Since a Member of Parliament is involved in the permanent membership, we are confident as a Parliament that this Member of Parliament will represent us well. We would want this Member of Parliament to report to this House under S.O 23 that they are doing well. We know that the Speaker will give opportunity to the Member of Parliament that will sit on the Trust to inform this House about the ongoing progress. I believe that this Bill is not controversial and because government is seeking to create more cities and now that we have a Sierra Leonean and investors to help the government to develop Bonthe City, this is a blessing for the people of Bonthe and we are pleading that after Bonthe, you come to Kono District. We have other opportunities in Kono District to invest. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think we are here today because we are Sierra Leoneans and we want to see good things for Sierra Leone. We have been to other countries and we have seen what they are doing in terms of developments. I am just from Cyprus, where my daughter graduated from the University. When I went there, I realised that Cyprus is an Island. It is so dry that you cannot think of anything relating to investments, but people have invested there and people are now competing to go and invest in Cyprus. If you did not have a visa, you would not go to Cyprus. This is an island. Therefore, Sierra

Leone has rich islands like the Bonthe Island and others. I believe this is an eye opener and if the people of Bonthe Island are really serious with the project, it would bring success to this nation. Sometimes when these projects are taken to our communities, those that are involved or included in projects would look at others as if they are not important and they even do things that are contrary. So, if the people of Bonthe are serious, I believe this project will be a very good example for the development of other islands.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to Part Two, which has to do with the structures and management of this particular project, the people will be part of these structures because if they are part, they will seek the interest of their people, but if they are not, they will just be there S.O 2 doing lay bɛlɛ to get small change. I believe that if they are part of the project, they will put their feet down to ensure that whatever that is in this Agreement, it will be properly implemented. Like my colleague said, we have ratified a lot of Agreements in this Well, but due to lack of monitoring and proper oversight to ensure that the provisions in the Agreements are properly considered and implemented, the investors are doing what they want to do. They think that they are the bosses among the people. As Parliamentarians, we should not only look at those from Bonthe, but all of us in Sierra Leone. As long as we are Sierra Leoneans, this is our project because it is an eye opener. People will be buying tickets to come and visit Sierra Leone. I know they are coming to Sierra Leone, but not as expected. Mr Speaker, like other Islands we have visited, we have seen people going there for vacations or for funfair. I am sure that is how we want to see Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I usually argue with some Sierra Leoneans when we go to attend conferences. When you meet the Kenyans, Nigerians and Ghanaians, they say a lot of good things about Sierra Leone. They will tell you that when I visited Freetown, there was electricity and I will say thank God because people used to say that Freetown is the darkest city. They will even say our government has tried because there is light in Freetown. Mr Speaker, a senior man stated that, S.O 2 bo lef mi, na bɛtɛ light this. I was so furious to know why he came back to Sierra Leone. He should have stayed where he was. I want to state here that Sierra Leone is beautiful; and Sierra Leone is so relaxing. I know we have not got enough time to look at these provisions in the Bill, but I believe that we are going to get a very fine project in Bonthe, which most people will admire. On that note, I want to urge colleagues to increase our oversight role in terms of monitoring the implementation of this project. Thank you very much.

HON. JOSEPH A. BASH KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am from Bo and I am very happy to talk about the development package that is about to hit Bonthe District. Interestingly, Bonthe District is blessed with two attributes; vis-à-vis, the

mainland and the Island. I will say that the bulk of the development package for Bonthe District is done on the mainland. I am saying this because I was privileged in my previous engagements to transverse the entire Bonthe District and I discovered that the Island is the most deprived community in Sierra Leone. You would agree with me that before this time, they used to have the Piassava trade and there were boats that traveled from Bonthe Island to Freetown. They used to have fishing vessels that also go to Bonthe Island, but all those facilities are no longer in existence because the environment is facing serious challenges. Today, we have sandbanks all over the Island, such that even when you are riding on a boat in the middle of the sea or river, you will get stuck and you have to stay there until there is high tide before you continue your journey. This has deprived the people from using boats or even passengers' boats to go to the Island.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, tourism is one major source of revenue that boosts the economy of any country. Bonthe Island has a huge touristic potential and if this is utilised, it would boost the economy of this country. People are talking about dredge, but to drag a bag of sand there is one great thing the people of Bonthe are looking up to. I have travelled to Dema, and Dema and Mania are the extreme ends of the Island. The challenges are enormous and we do not have the manpower and the resources to undertake developments and improve the lives of the people. Interestingly, investors have been attracted to Bonthe Island and this is something we should be proud of. We should be jubilating because it is going to take over the developments that we could not offer to them and once the Island is developed, we will assure this nation that the touristic sector will also generate revenue that will boost the economy of this nation. It will also create job opportunities that will improve the livelihood of the people who are on the Island. The Island is so deprived that even when they send government officials to go and work there, they stay on the mainland. Again, the doctors who are being sent to provide medical services to the people of Bonthe Island spend their time on the mainland. So, with all these challenges, I think it is appropriate that there is now an eye opener to connect Bonthe Island to the mainland and the rest of Sierra Leone, so that they can also enjoy the life that is worth living.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to this House to speedily enact this Bill. As my colleagues have highlighted that we have ratified many Agreements here, but we have not been effective in terms of monitoring the implementation of those Agreements. I will also want to crave the indulgence of Mr Speaker to ensure that in the immediate future, we start reviewing those Agreements, especially those that have to do with investors. We have to see how far they have gone with the implementation process. As a Parliament, we ratified them in good spirit and with sincerity, expecting them to improve the lives of the people, but delaying the

implementation is dangerous. Sometimes the blame goes to Members of Parliament. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: We are going to round off the debate now, but before that, let me at this stage recognise the presence of certain eminent personalities who are here this morning, starting with Dr Priscilla Schwartz, former Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone; Mr Madison Thompson, the first Parliamentary Council; Mrs Margaret Kadi, the Chief Operating Officer of the Akuna Group; Mr Fraud Davies, a senior Lawyer of this nation and indigene of Bonthe Island. He is particularly forcing his strength towards ensuring that this Bill is ratified. That is why he is here. We also have Mrs Elizabeth Ahmed Conteh, she is the mama of Bonthe Island and she is also here to demonstrate her interest in this particular Bill; Mr Abdul J. Dumbuya of the Akuna Group; Mr Sheku Koroma, the Executive Assistant to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice; Mr Kwaya Shobie, the General Manager of the China Gansu International Economy and Technical Corporation, Sierra Leone Limited. He represents one of the two companies that are stationed on the Island. He is also here to demonstrate his interest in this particular Bill. They have their headquarters on the Island and they are the ones doing the Bongoma Bridge. That bridge connects the municipality with the rest of the Chiefdoms. He is doing a very good job there and he is here together with Mr J.C Deng, who is the Business Manager of that Company. Thank you very much.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Members who have contributed to this debate. I would also like to thank the Minister for piloting this Bill. I know as a young person, you would have done due diligence on this document. Of course, this country is yearning for developments and developments of such nature should be accepted by us. The Executive has done what they are supposed to do and as per law, this is our document and as Members of Parliament, I want to advise that we go through this document for the good of all of us. This is to ensure that at the end of the day, we will have a document that will stand the test of time. This is Sierra Leone and whatever we do, we should do it with our conscience. Therefore, I want to thank the Minister for this Bill. He has done lots of consultations and he is convinced that this document will stand the test of time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have got the Bill and our business here is to make laws that stand the test of time. As a Parliament, we are eager for developments and I want to advise that when this Bill gets to the Committee Stage, we will address all the gray areas or ambiguities. We will tidy up this Bill and make sure that this Bill stands the test of time. I want to thank very much because you have done well by bringing this Bill to us. However, this is our document now and whatever we do to this

document is based on what the law says we should do. Thank you very much Honourable Members and when we get to the Committee Stage, we will do the needful.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Leader of Government Business. Mr Minister, please respond to the comments raised by Honourable Members.

MR ALPHA SEASAY ESQ: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you all for the interest you have shown in this very progressive Bill. We want to see that it is a pro-business Bill, not only for Bonthe Island, but for all of us. Of course, we know that this will enable a world class business environment not only in Bonthe Island, but the entire country. We have done the cost benefit analysis and more so in the context of revenue share with the Government of Sierra Leone. I noted also that a question was raised concerning the inputs that the people of Bonthe Island have had in this process. I want to assure you that this has been a product of a consultative process in which the people and leaders of Bonthe Island have had significant inputs. A question was also raised as to whether this is an investment that is already in existence. I want to say yes, it has been in existence. Inasmuch as it is a joint venture, the details that have been laid out in the Bill before you have not been implemented on the Island. However, I take note of the various comments that have been made in support of this Bill and the concerns that have been raised. We encourage Parliament to do the needful as well.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled, 'The Investments Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 be read the second time.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The Bill entitled, 'The Investments Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 being an Act to provide for the ratification by Parliament of the Investment Framework Agreement, for the investments in the development of the Sherbro Island between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone of the one part and Sherbro Alliance Partner Limited of the other part and to provide for other related matters has been read the second time].

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I have been requested by Leaders and the Chairman of the Legislative Committee that we have a brief meeting in the Speaker's Conference Room with the Attorney General and Minister of Justice before the Committee Stage commences. In this regard, I invite the Chairman and the Leaders to the Speaker's conference Room. Attorney General and Minister of Justice, you are required to be present for just twenty minutes. Honourable Members, I want you to wait for just twenty minutes before the Committee Stage. This House is stood down for twenty minutes.

[The House was stood down at 11:25 a.m. and was resumed at 1:30 p.m.]

[COMMITTEE STAGE]

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: The parties have agreed that the government shall be entitled to a share on turnover on the fifth anniversary of the development commencement date of **5%** and commencing on the 10th year of **10%**, provided that **10%** of the government share shall be retained and paid into the Sherbro Community Trust Fund for development purpose. You can continue after the 15th anniversary of the development commencement date, the party shall review the economic performance of the Development Authority and the Development Zone, its sources of revenue at the level of investments within the development zone and negotiate a broader participation in the development authority based upon its portfolios of assets. The last aspect of that proviso should be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: So, instead of the **5%**, the **10%** stand?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: But instead of Net Revenue Share?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have share or turnover?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Absolutely, Mr Chairman, but that is the first phase. I was going to continue with the **10%** because provided that **10%** of the government share shall be retained and paid into the Sherbro Community Trust Fund for development purpose.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay!

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: I can go all over again.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Let me read the new rendition.

THE CHAIRMAN: Please read the new rendition.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: The parties have agreed that the government shall be entitled to a share on turnover on the fifth anniversary of the development commencement date of **5%** and commencing on the 10th year of **10%**, provided that **10%** of the government share shall be retained and paid into the Sherbro Community Trust Fund for development purposes. Then you can continue after the 15th anniversary of the development commencement date, the party shall review the economic performance of the Development Authority and the Development Zone, its sources of revenue at the level of investments within the development zone and negotiate a

broad participation in the development authority based upon its portfolios of assets. The last aspect of that proviso should be deleted.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I hope the Attorney General understands where he is coming from. We should understand first of all, so that the seconder of the Motion also understands exactly what he/she is going to second.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not need the input of the Attorney General.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: For the records, we do not have transcribers here, but the Clerks should be taking note. Mr Thompson, are you taking note?

THE CHAIRMAN: Any seconder?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I so second, Mr Chairman.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: For what?

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you were not paying attention? He is moving the motion. Please pay attention.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: Now in Clause 4.2, the parties have agreed that the government shall be entitled to a share on turnover, which shall commence on the fifth anniversary of the development commencement date of **5%** and commencing on the 10th year **10%**, provided that **10%** of the government share shall be retained and paid into the Sherbro Community Trust Fund for development purpose. After the 15th anniversary of the development commencement date, the party shall review the economic performance of the Development Authority and the development zone, its sources of revenue and the level of investments within the development zone, and negotiate a broader participation in the development authority based upon its portfolio of assets. That is the new rendition.

THE CHAIRMAN: The proviso, 'provided that if no Agreement can be reached by the parties, the government shall continue to receive **10%** of net revenue share is deleted. That is for Page 11. Do you have anything to say on Page 11 or Page 12?

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Yes, Mr Chairman. We have some concerns. Mr Chairman, for me, the **5%**... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: I think we should not delay on that point. It is a Motion put and the Motion is already carried by the House.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is already carried and you cannot comment on that anymore.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: That was why we were asking.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, that is why you should be reading your documents. You were not paying attention, Honourable Member.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Chairman of the Legislative Committee, you wanted to add the 5% to what? I think we are done with that. We now go to Page 11. Page 11? Page 12?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 12, Clause 4.6[A].

THE CHAIRMAN: 4.6[A]?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes sir, starting from the third to the last line. I will read the new rendition because the last two and a half lines should be deleted. The management and control of the affairs of the Development Authority shall be vested in the Board of Directors of the Development Authority. The Board, acting through duly appointed offices, employees and agents shall have the authority to exercise all powers necessary and convenient for the purpose of the Development Authority, as set forth in this Agreement. The memorandum of articles of association should be deleted.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, please pay attention. The rest is deleted. That is for Page 12. Page 13?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes, Mr Chairman, Page 13. Clause 4.6 b[ii]. Following the startup phase, the parties shall be entitled to appoint an additional eight directors, six of whom shall be appointed by SAP and two by the government, who shall be independent of the parties and shall have the duty to promote the development of Sherbro Island, consistent with this Agreement, each an independent director, and in consultation with the Board, the parties may assign this right of appointment to an independent third party or parties. Mr Chairman, let me just make something clear here. Where we have six directors based on what we are proposing here is eight, six of whom shall be appointed by SAP and two by the government who shall be independent of the parties and shall have a duty to promote the development of the Sherbro Island.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Clerk, are you paying attention? Mr Rogers, please help them. Under 4.6 b[2].

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: For the two members, the Chairman was talking about independence, but they are to be appointed by the government and six are to be appointed by SAP. In what sense are they going to be independent?

THE CHAIRMAN: In the execution of their duties. They are not subject to any control.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Chairman, the word there is independent. I am asking whether in their selection or their duties. Are you saying they will be autonomous?

THE CHAIRMAN: We are talking about their duties and not their appointments. It is in the execution of their duties.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: I will not go further sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Do you have any other comment on Page 13?

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: I am sure we are in this because we believe that the government should be relevant in everything we do. If you looked at the appointment proportion, we have six from SAP and two from the government. You can really see the disparity in terms of the strength. Like what the Honourable Member was saying, no member is going to be independent. SAP will obviously appoint those who are ready to execute their actions or instructions and the same with the government. Let us look at the strength, six to be appointed by the SAP and two to be appointed by the government. So what relevance are we going to have as a government? This literally means most of the decisions will have to be in favour of SAP and at the end of the day, we are just ornament of decoration because we do not have any decision-making powers. So these are some of the things we should be looking at. If we looked at our contribution in all of these, the value of the land alone is something we should consider. We are giving duty waivers and free work permits. I believe that the proportion regarding appointment is a concern to some of us because we want the Government to have a strong saying in decision-making, otherwise, if we put a proportion that is not in our interest and decision that is not objective is taken, it will become difficult for the government.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: I think we are missing the point here. The intent of this Bill is to create the enabling environment that attracts Foreign Direct Investments [FDI] and 'he who pays the piper calls the tune.' They bring the money to invest. If you put red tape in the Bill, you are already creating road blocks to prevent FDI that you are trying to access in first place. So, what we need to do is to appreciate the fact that they [investors] have been considerate that government should have their own representation in the arrangement of SAP and in taking decisions. For me, I do not see the number of representation to be a problem. What I see is harmony. Hence, the number that the government is going to get in the setup can harmonise with the development partners and the investments. We have to get the investments running. We should not forget that the Sherbro Island has been in existence from 1800s and as long as God knows how long, we have been keeping it. We now have a development model coming in the form of an Agreement, wherein government representation and government interest is factored. I think we should also get a mindset of holding the balance of what we want.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, do we want to maintain Sherbro Island as it was and as it is or do we want a different Sherbro Island wherein a government will get revenue from resources mobilised by these investors? The Sherbro Island is going to be an autonomous domain where the government will get **5%** and later progresses. The Sherbro Community Development Fund will also earn **10%** from every **5%** or **10%**. For me, I see the number as infinitesimal in this case in terms of making an argument of having a balance.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Honourable Member.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Mr Chairman, thank you very much.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are not in your seat, but I give you leave to proceed.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Mr Chairman, as I listen to the debate, we have to be very careful as to how we want to pass this particular Bill. This is about Sierra Leone. I agree that we want to bring investors and we have ratified similar Agreements before. These same investors that have been coming to Sierra Leone have been ripping Sierra Leone and go away. They portrayed themselves as bosses and the Agreements we ratified gave them the laxity to behave so. We have seen what Koindu Holdings Limited is doing to our people. This is because we are not part of the Board that makes decisions. The Board took a decision to sack our people, close their operations and went away. We have to be very careful when talking about the Board and those who represent us in the Board [*Applause*]. You would agree with me that the Board is the highest decision-making body in that particular investment. If we do not take our time as to who should seat in the Board, we will be in trouble. We should not be doing things in haste because we want investments. We will regret why we decide to allow such a Clause to be in this Agreement.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, inasmuch as government is going to have two members, but none is going to be the Chairperson of the Board and that means the Company is going to have six members on the Board. This means when issues of voting come up, they will take a decision to go with their money. Therefore, we have to look at it critically. Yes, we want to go and vote for our Women's Leader of our party, but this is a life time investment which we should not do in a haste or rush. This is because at the end of the day, we will blame ourselves. We took an oath to serve and protect the interest of our people. Thank you very much.

HON. MOSES EDWIN: Mr Chairman, I am missing the point. These are investments and you would agree with me that Government dominance in any investments is usually frowned at by international partners. The Board is created to attract investors or attract people who will come and invest their money. However, in the event government is

playing a dominant role, of course the donors or whoever may want to invest will frown at it and shy away from same. That is why at least those who spend their money should be in majority. For me, I want us to leave it as it is, so that the investors are not discouraged. This will enable us to be attracted to loan or credit facilities. I want to re-emphasise here that where there is government dominance, the investors will frown at it. I thank you, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. I was a bit surprised when I heard the Honourable Member from Bonthe. We are doing the right thing for the interest of our people. I agree that we need investors, but not at the expense or detriment of the people. The Honourable Member only focuses on the aspect of getting investors. If we get investors, but our people are not reaping the real benefit, then what is the essence of getting investors *[Applause]*? If you looked at the setup of the Board, you will realise that ultimate power is given to these investors and decision-making in respect of the sovereignty of this government is infinitesimal. This will give them the power to take all sorts of decisions *[Applause]*.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, if you looked at Page 13, Clause 4.6[b&c], it gives the Authority to whosoever to appoint the Chairperson or remove that person at their will and appoint somebody else. How is the director going to be independent? I am asking this question because if the Director takes a decision that is contrary to the investors, they will remove him/her. The Director will be subjected to their directives. We have the same provision in 77[1k]. This was why I said that we need this investment because it is good for the municipality, but let us also look at some of these technical points very critically, so that the government is not made irrelevant or disadvantaged in decision making process. We should be able to take decisions in the interest of the people, but I am afraid with the way we are going. I see your point, but this is something that is going to affect you directly; even though if it affects, it will affect all of us as a country. So, let us look at the composition of the Board as we progress.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Chairman, this brings me to one of the Agreements we wanted to ratify here. In that Agreement, the investor made a commitment of **\$10mIn** as investments, but some of us looked at the tax waiver and the concessions given to the investor and realised that the GST, withholding taxes and others far outweighs the **\$10mIn** he wanted to invest. We know that this particular investor is a credible investor, but we must do what is good for the people. We have looked at Clause 4.2, where all of these arguments started. We have given leverage to the

investor to invest for certain number of years before start paying **5%** or **10%**. It was a Motion and there was no counter Motion. If you looked at Page 13, there is sub-clause 'f.'

THE CHAIRMAN: Where is the 'f'?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: On Page 13, Clause 4.6.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are on Clause 4.6, Page 13.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: That what I am saying sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not have 'f.'

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Okay. That is Page 14. Mr Chairman, it has a connection to this discussion. What some of us are presenting here this afternoon is for us to look beyond what we have now seen. This is situation of six against two on the Board and the quorum in terms of who takes decision is very important. Mr Chairman, if we failed to look at this particular Clause, I am afraid.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which Clause, are you still referring to, Honourable Member?

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: The argument is on the composition of the Board.

THE CHAIRMAN: In that case we stick a pin on it and move on. We will certainly come back to it. That is Page 13. Do you have any other query relating to Page 13?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Page 13, Clause 'C.'

THE CHAIRMAN: [c]?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: The Director should be appointed on... - *[Interruption]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, we do not have control over that. You cannot micromanage investments.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: This is because you are appointed at the discretion of somebody and they are serving at the will of somebody.

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly, Mr Deputy Speaker.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us move to Page 14.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Chairman, on this particular Bill, I will take myself out of this discussion because I noticed that those on the front bench are moving the same direction... - *[Laughter]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Mustapha Sellu, you have to be extremely careful... - *[Laughter]*. Page 14? Page 15? If you do not have much to say, just sit down... - *[Laughter]* Page 16? Page 17? Page 18? Page 19?

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Page 16, Clause 4.8[b]. It talks about the powers and functions of the Chair person, such as deciding the agenda. I believe the Board members may have inputs to make on the agenda.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, if you have any other input, you do it under Any Other Business [AOB].

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: It can be drafted and share with other members.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, let us not go into the details.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: Okay, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: We should not go into the administration of the Board. Page 16? Page 17?

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN-WILLIAMS: Mr Chairman, Page 17, Clause 4.10. It says, 'a chairperson or any member may, at any time, resign his office by letter. I want to know if the member resigning is free to do so without giving notice.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us not go into administration of the Board. We are just making the law.

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN-WILLIAMS: Okay sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 17? Page 18? Page 19? Page 20? Page 21?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Page 21, Clause 4.14. You can see that it is a repetition of the side notes of 4.13. So, we have 4.13, the 'Coordinator to supervise Agreement' and when you look at 4.14, 'Coordinator to supervise Agreement.' I think this side note should be jurisdictional limitations of this economic authorities except otherwise.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Clerk, please take note. Page, 21? Page 22?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Page 22 [5b]. Let me read the new rendition. 'A philanthropic catalyst that forms community initiatives and social services in the development zones in consultation with the Sherbro Community Trust, including making contributions to the development fund.'

THE CHAIRMAN: We have to add 'in consultation with the Sherbro Community Trust?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think that is fair. Page 22?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 22 [62[a]. Here we have a composition of Sherbro Community Trust. So, Clause 62[a][ii] to add the Mayor and definite article, or the Bonthe municipality.

THE CHAIRMAN: It now reads as 'the Mayor of the Bonthe municipality.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Clerk, please take note.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Roman III should read 'the member or Members of Parliament representing Sherbro Island.' This is because it can be a member or members.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Clerk, take note.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: I am still on Page 22, Clause 6.2[b], in addition to the permanent members in 'a,' three indigenes from the Sherbro Island who are not permanent members appointed by the President of Sierra Leone for a term.... – *[Inaudible]*. This time is questionable, Mr Chairman. We have to increase the time from five to ten years because five years will not be enough to get a whole lot of things properly settled or done. So, to extend the first term of five years to ten years and shall be eligible for reappointment for five years only. So, we are talking about ten years and eligible for reappointment for only five years.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is for Page 22. Mr Clerk, take note. Page 23?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Page 23, Clause 6.3[A]. It talks about transactions relating to land on the Sherbro Island, including ensuring the receipt of proceeds of land sales, leases or rentals by land owners. What we are adding there 'leases or rentals.'

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr Clerk, take note. Page 24? I am giving a ruling here that when the Bill is finally produced, I should look at it and I endorse every Clause before it is taken to the President for his assent. Page 24?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 24, Clause 6.3[G]. Any other matters which the Sherbro Community Trust... - *[Incomplete]*. I propose that we delete 'permanent.'

THE CHAIRMAN: That is fair. Delete 'permanent,' Honourable Members.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 24, Clause 7[b]. It says, 'the Development Authority, in accordance with the development zone law, shall also have the right to procure land rights through eminent domain, exercised only with the approval of the Sherbro Community Trust.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is important to safeguard the community people out there to prevent any form of.... – *[Incomplete]*.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: After domain, we insert 'exercised only with the approval of the Sherbro Community Trust. We have to get rid of 'in consultation with.'

THE CHAIRMAN: Take note, Mr Clerk. Page 25?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 25, Clause 8[c]. It should now read as: 'subject to the provisions in 4.2, the Sherbro Community Trust shall be funded by yearly contributions by the Development Authority, who shall determine the quantum and manner of its contribution and development fund.' So, subject to the provisions in 4.2, the Sherbro Community Trust shall be funded by yearly contributions by the Development Authority, which shall determine the quantum and manner of its contributions to the Development Fund.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 26 talks about the Community Trust, which we have already dealt with, where we have the Paramount Chiefs on the Sherbro Island, the Mayor of Bonthe municipality, the Member or Members of Parliament of the Sherbro Island and three other members appointed by the President. You can see that in 6.2. Page 26?

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: I will refer you to the implementation. I will look at 10.3 which talks about 'modification on the development of... - *[Interruption]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, we are on Page 26.

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: Yes, Mr Chairman. Page 26,

THE CHAIRMAN: We have no number there. You are referring to Page 27.

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: Okay, I will wait for it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Page 26? Page 27?

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: Page 27, 10.3 deals with modification of the development programme. So, the parties hereby agree and acknowledge that SAP and any projects participants, as authorised by Development Authority, may from time to time make changes to the development programme in order to: [a] comply with the applicable technical, environmental and social standards; [b] address any customary law issues. There is nothing on consultation procedures and timelines. So, I do not know if the Chairman can take note of it. I will also take you to 10.2, which deals with initiation of development programme. It says 'unless otherwise agree between the parties, shall commence the implementation of the development programme on the development commencement dates. So, the problem I have here is that there is no clear criterion for adjusting the development commencement date, and that is critical to be noted.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, the commencement date is provided for in this particular Bill. That is from the date of execution.

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: Okay, Mr Chairman.

HON. ALEX M. ROGERS: Mr Chairman, Page 27, 10.3 deals with the issue of compliance with any applicable technical, environmental and social standards applicable. This is too broad. This is because we envisage the need for resettlement. We know how commission resettlement programme is and if you leave it like that, I do not think it will be good. How would you handle that issue? I want the Chairman to throw light on it.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: He said if the resettlement is applicable, then it is going to be applied.

HON. ALEX M. ROGERS: You know how commission resettlement package is and I want to know if you took that into consideration?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: They said if resettlement is applicable, then, of course, everything that falls under resettlement package will be applicable to that particular instance.

HON. ALEX M. ROGERS: I do not want to create problem for you. I do not know whether the issue of consent on zones was noted regarding the parties or the target beneficiaries within that particular location.

THE CHAIRMAN: They are going to be represented by the Sherbro Community Trust.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: We have the Sherbro Community Trust and in fact, this provision is more specific. It pays attention to what is going to be applicable based on the assessment. If something about resettlement is going to be applicable, it is really going to be applied. So, let me allay your fears on that, Honourable Member.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That is for Page 27.

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: My last point on 27 has to do with 10.1, which the development programme sets out the initial strategy. I will repeat the initial strategy for economic development of Sherbro Island. This means there is already a strategy. So, the problem I have in this particular document is that there is no mention of local community involvement or sustainability considerations. So, I do not know if the Chairman can elaborate on that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, there is local community involvement through their Community Trust. The Community Trust serves as a liaison between the Development Authority and the local people.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: In fact, the presentation yesterday clearly established that the Sherbro Community Trust will be representing the local community's interest.

THE CHAIRMAN: Indeed and these are their people and children. Page 27? Page 28?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 28, Mr Chairman, 10.4[a].

THE CHAIRMAN: 10.4[a]?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Yes sir. The new rendition is 'dredging of all sea routes, including the Sheba Street in order to allow the local fishing trawlers and all the vessels access the Sherbro Island. I am suggesting 'all sea routes, including.... – *[Interruption]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Clerk, please take note. It says, 'all dredging of all sea routes, including the Sheba Street in order to allow local fishing trawlers and other vessels access to the Sherbro Island.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Still on Page 28. Under 'd,' instead of rehabilitation or infrastructure, we replace it with 'construction.'

THE CHAIRMAN: And under 'E,' the Chiefdom is DEMA, not 'Dama.' Page 28? Page 29? Page 30?

HON. HAWA R. SIAFA: Page 30, Clause 10.8. The government should serve on any... – *[Inaudible]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where is that?

HON. HAWA R. SIAFA: 10.8.

THE CHAIRMAN: 10.8, government commitments to serve a project participant? Yes, the government shall serve any project participants?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr Chairman.

HON. HAWA R. SIAFA: We are giving these people blank Cheque, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not understand, Honourable Member.

HON. HAWA R. SIAFA: Let us read it again for us to understand.

THE CHAIRMAN: What did you want to say?

HON. HAWA R. SIAFA: I was referring to 10.8

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. It says, 'the government shall issue to serve at any project participant, any and all approvals and clearances at all applicable jurisdictional levels as may be required for the purposes of SAP and any project participant undertaking investment pursuant to the development programme. The master investment concession, each relevant concession and any project activities, all approvals and clearances. So, what is wrong with that?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, I do not think there is anything wrong with that because this is also tied to the concession. There is no way we can move the effective implementation of this project. In fact, it is applicable to all jurisdictional levels that have to do with the project, something that has to do with the project not outsider.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think it is okay. That is for Page 30. Page 31? Page 32? Page 33? Page 34? Page 35? Page 36?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Page 36, Mr Chairman. I can vividly recall that during the pre-legislative hearing we spoke about concessions and the presenter made it clear that it excludes exploration of minerals. It was against that backdrop that when I see natural resource service here, it raises concern. It was made clear yesterday that we do not have anything to do with that particular aspect of mining or exploration. I propose that we delete natural resource service from this particular aspect. There is a link between this Page 36 and 88.

THE CHAIRMAN: When we get there, bring it up.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Okay, Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any counter Motion on the deletion of natural resource on Page 36? There is none. Mr Clerk, please take note. Page 37? Page 38? We have to go back to the issue we earlier stick a pin on.

THE CHAIRMAN: Where is Honourable Mustapha Sellu? He is not here and so we leave it like that?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Proceed, Mr Minister.

THE MINISTER: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that Parts 1 to 5, Clauses 1 to 12 stand part of the Bill as amended.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]

Parts 1 to 5, Clauses 1 to 12 formed part of the Bill as amended]

Parts 6 to 8, Clauses 13 to 21.16 and the Schedule stand part of the Bill

THE MINISTER: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that Parts 6 to 8, Clauses 13 to 21.16 and the Schedule stand part of the Bill.

Parts 6 to 8, Clauses 13 to 21.16 and the Schedule Proposed.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, the other part of Page 38? Page 39? Page 40? Page 41? Page 42? Page 43?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Page 43, Clause 13.4 [b[iii]]. Let us look at the last line, which says, 'staff and each project participant shall benefit from a tax free and import duty, free corridor on main land Sierra Leone with respect to any project activities and the implementation of the development programme as shall be authorised by the development policy. In this case, Mr Chairman, I propose that we have that for the first five years of implementation. In that regard, it now reads as, 'development programme, as shall be authorised by the Development Authority for the first five years of implementation.'

THE CHAIRMAN: For the first five years of implementation. Any counter Motion?

HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH: Yes, Mr Chairman. I want to suggest that instead of the first five years, we leave it open because when you are introducing an economic free zone concept, you cannot tell how the business will look like in the initial five years. If you tag it and the business is efficacious enough, then it will be difficult to ask for more time. I will ask that we leave it open or increase the time a bit.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I will suggest that we review the situation after five years and then it could be determined which one we should take, but we can leave it open like that.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sure you are always free to come to this House for any adjustment. Mr Clerk, take note of that. Page 43? Page 44? Page 45? Page 46? Page 47? Page 48? Regarding Page 47, under arbitration, initially we said under governing law that the governing law should be the Laws of Sierra Leone under 14.2 then under arbitration, it says arbitration shall be governed by English Law. I would have thought we add where applicable, Sierra Leone law because we have an Arbitration Act in Sierra Leone.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: I think we can add that because already the governing law is clearly stated in the Sierra Leone Law.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then under Arbitration, where applicable.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: We have 14.2[a], which is the Arbitration Clause, shall be governed by English law.

THE CHAIRMAN: And where applicable, Sierra Leone Law. So, if you look at it and you think that Sierra Leone Law is applicable, then you can use Sierra Leone Law because we have the Arbitration Act in Sierra Leone and we are trying to develop that aspect of the law in Sierra Leone. Page 48? Page 49? Page 50? Page 51? Page 52? Page 53? Page 54? Page 55? Page 56? Page 57? Page 58? Page 59? Page 60? Page 61? Page 62? Page 63? Page 64? Page 65? Page 66? Page 67? Page 68? Page 69? Page 70?

Page 71? Page 72? Page 73? Page 74? Page 75? Page 76? Page 77? Page 78? Page 79?
Page 80? Page 81? Page 82? Page 83? Page 84? Page 85? Page 86? Page 87? Page 88?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Again, this is just a continuation of the point I raised earlier regarding natural resource service. An in-depth version has provided for what entails on the natural source. We have exploration drilling. These are all there and they are talking about surface drilling, plastering, but what you have is underground mining. So, provide the oversight to know where we draw the line. That it is only the provision of those services and not engaging in those services.

HON. IBRAHIM T.CONTEH: Mr Chairman, those companies do not have mining exploration license for that area, but their mining concession is specific. It is determined in the Mining Lease Agreement. However, we now have new fiscal arrangement for the mining Agreement, as provided for by the Mines and Minerals Act, 2021. Therefore, their exploration does not extend to this point. If we leave it as it is, then we are opening a window for people to encroach and utilise our natural resources without recourse to government.

THE CHAIRMAN: So, what do you suggest?

HON. IBRAHIM T.CONTEH: I support the Chairman of the Legislative Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: For deletion?

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Yes Sir. We did Clause 11.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, that is deleted. I think it is Clause 4.2 on Page 88. Mr Clerk, take note. Page 89?

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: I was browsing through and I thought about what is trending now that has to do with climate change. I think mitigation and adaptation are key. I know that it is a project, but it has to do with the environment and maybe there will be some activities that have to do with climate change. I have not seen anything on climate change.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, let me hear the Chairman.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. A question was raised regarding Climate Change. In fact, the question was asked by the Honourable Member from Pujehun, but the fears were allayed that before a project of this nature is carried out, the standards require that they carry out an environmental impact assessment to the highest level. So, I just want to allay your fears again that the environmental aspects is going to be taken into consideration, and all climate change adaptation and mitigation measures are going to be put in place.

THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly, Honourable Member.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: I know they would allay these fears, but if these fears are allayed just by word of mouth and it is not documented, it will be difficult to address it when our environment is adversely depleted or affected by their activities. We must have in mind that we are dealing with an Island and we now have the effects of climate change in Sierra Leone that has to do with the rising tide to an extent that we are even losing some of our beautiful islands to sea. We also have something to do with the mangroves and all the rest of it that has to do with climate change. So, I was thinking that instead of allaying our fears just by word of mouth, let there be one or two paragraphs that deal with climate change mitigation and adaptation.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: While I agree with that suggestion, climate change is a serious concern for the world. I think we see most of the activities that are taking place around our vicinities and we understand them. For example, she spoke about the mangroves. Even though most of our mangroves have been depleted, but what we have in Bonthe currently is more than sufficient to make provision for the existence of a city in Bonthe or Sherbro Island. So, I think we should be encouraged by the fact that they have given us their word and we should believe them in good faith. It is not everything that we have to legislate; we have oversight responsibility. That is why in this Bill, there is provision and there is recognition of the authorities, and state and government and even the local municipality. Therefore, they will have to provide oversight to ensure that the necessary actions to protect the environment are taken and are monitored. For me, I think that is sufficient comfort.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Again, I think if the governing law is going to be that of the Republic of Sierra Leone, we have the Environment Protection Act. In fact, it is a requirement for every project to ensure that environmental impact assessment license is secured. I do not think in any way we are going to escape it because that is part of the responsibility. We do not even need to state it here that they have to secure an environmental impact assessment license because that is exactly what the EPA is responsible to do and they will be required to do that without even stating it here.

HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA: I agree with the Chairman and Deputy Speaker. However, I am emphasising on this because Sierra Leone is good at signing treaties and Agreements, but the implementation and monitoring these Agreements has been a thorny issue. We have to prove to the international community that we are considering these things very seriously. The use of renewable energy during this project is also very good for the sustainability of the project and even climate change and adaptation. Nevertheless, if it is a gentleman agreement, I have nothing to say but to agree. If it is for the good of the community, I have no problem with that. I thank you.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: It is not a gentleman's agreement. It is already stated in the environment protection legislation. It is up to them to ensure that the project of such magnitude fulfills these requirements. We have it in our laws. I do not think we need to restate it here.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: The Bonthe Island is not a separate jurisdiction of Sierra Leone; it is part of Sierra Leone. So, whatever law that is governing the rest of Sierra Leone will definitely govern the Sherbro Island.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us proceed, Honourable Members. Page 88? Page 89? Page 90? Page 91? Page 92? Page 93? Page 94?

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, Page 94 deals with the Sherbro City and it says: "the development Zone law shall constitute the city as a public corporation with full legal proposal, legislative and executive... - *[Inaudible]*. So it should be read as, 'constitute the city as a public corporation with full legal and administrative capacities set forth in the statute.'

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, do you have any counter Motion? I think that is fair. Page 95? Mr Clerk, take note that instead of Legislative and Executive capacities, it should be administrative capacities. Page 96? Page 97? Page 98? Page 99? Page 100? Page 101? Page 102? Any other matters?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, before the Minister takes the Floor, I am very sorry to take you back to Page 71[3].

THE CHAIRMAN: I will grant you special leave, Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: I do not know whether it is the same point that you want to raise. I was also going to look at it eventually. The Proviso is that all local and political entities are maintained.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will grant you special leave, Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL S. MARRAY-CONTEH: Mr Chairman, in Clause 3.1, I move that we add the proviso provided for all local political entities to be maintained.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any seconder.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I so second, Mr Chairman,

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

MR ALPHA SEASAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that Parts 6 to 8, Clauses 13 to 21.16 and Schedule stand part of the Bill as amended.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

Parts 6 to 8, Clauses 13 to 21.16 and Schedule formed part of the Bill.

THE HOUSE RESUMES

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I want to remind the Minister that amendments have been made and he should make sure that he works with your team to ensure that these amendments are fully captured.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Minister, please report on the Bill.

MR ALPHA SEASAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I report that the Bill, having gone through the Committee Stage of the whole House with amendments, I now move that the Bill entitled, 'The Investments Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 be read the third time and passed into Law.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Bill entitled, 'The Investments Framework Agreement [Ratification] Act, 2025 being an Act to provide for the ratification by Parliament of the Investments Framework Agreement, for investment in the development of the Sherbro Island between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone of the one part and Sherbro Alliance Partner Limited of the other part and to provide for other related matters has been read the Third time and passed into Law].

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 2:00 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 1st July, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.]