

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

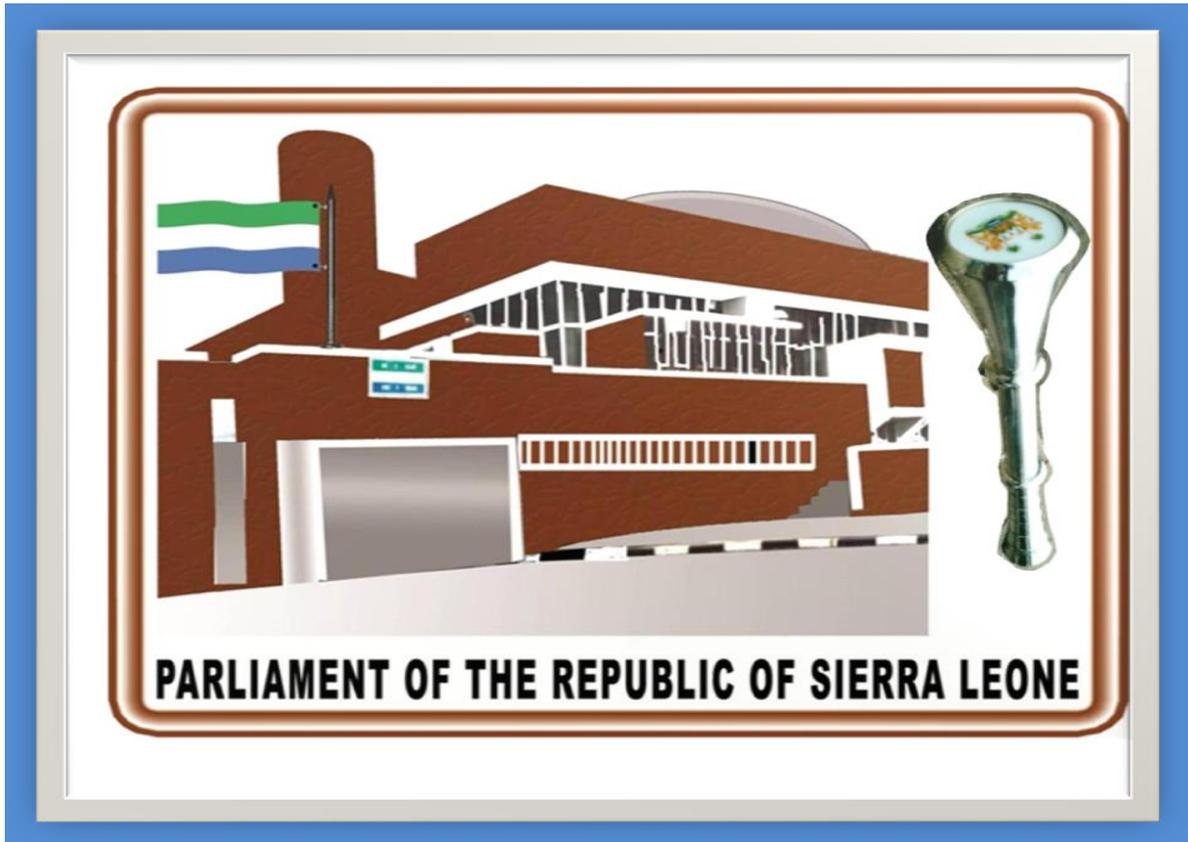
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

SECOND SESSION - FIRST MEETING

MONDAY, 27TH MAY, 2019.

SESSION – 2018/2019.



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Monday, 27th May, 2019.

CONTENTS

I. PRAYERS

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21ST MAY, 2019.

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT RTD BRIGADIER JULIUS MAADA BIO

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT RETIRED BRIGADIER JULIUS MAADA BIO FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF SECOND SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 2ND MAY, 2019.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

**SECOND SESSION – FIRST MEETING
OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

Monday, 27th May, 2019

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:30 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

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

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 21ST MAY, 2019.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we shall skip Pages 1 to 4. If you have any problems with either the spelling of your name or your constituency numbers, please contact the Clerk's office. We start with Page 5. Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? If there is no correction or observation, would somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 21st May, 2019 as presented?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BRIMA MASNSARAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for Parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 21st May, 2019 has been adopted]

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, RETIRED BRIGADIER JULIUS MAADA BIO

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for the address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of the State Opening of Second Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 2nd may, 2019.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Leader of Government Business. Any seconder?

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: We want to conduct this debate with great expedition. I intend to take three speakers from either side of the aisle and conclude today's proceedings.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, the practise over the years is that when an important debate of this nature is taking place, we would encourage people who occupy Government offices, especially Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDA's] to be present, so that they can listen to Members of Parliament *[Applause]*. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition. Quite frankly, I am a bit surprised. I did direct that an announcement be made to that effect. I am a bit surprised that senior members of the MDAs are not here. It does not necessarily mean Ministers or Heads of MDAs should be here, but senior members ought to be here.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, I advised that those who came to represent their MDAs stand, so that Members of Parliament can see them.

THE SPEAKER: A very good suggestion. Shall we please see them? Mr Leader, please help us.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, after your instructions, the Clerk's Office actually sent out invitations to all MDAs to be represented here for this debate and my colleagues are just confirming that it was actually announced on the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC].

THE SPEAKER: And I want to say that this is not new at all. We went through similar situation last Session when we literally had to beg MDAs to be properly represented here and we see a repetition of that in this Session. So, what do we do? We stand down to allow them to come?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, I can also confirm to you that even the Deputy Clerk of the House wrote a special letter to those MDAs to be present here today.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, that indeed happened. I saw correspondence to that effect, but the fact of the matter is that no MDA is currently represented except Mrs Fatmata Mustapha, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture and I pay tribute to her.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like you rightly mentioned, we have gone through this before. I remember in the last session, you drew the attention of MDAs to their consistent absenteeism to witness this debate. I think we should not allow them to stop us from the job we are supposed to be doing here. We have to be very firm in our decisions towards them. This is because civil servants are taking Members of Parliament for granted *[Applause]*. Only one senior Permanent Secretary is here and I am not saying it because she is seated, but since the last Parliament, she has been coming here and that shows the respect she has for this House. If others do not have respect for this House, they should face the consequences *[Applause]*. It is not about us deferring our deliberation because they failed to come. Let us continue with our work and then do what will make them realise that this is the House of Parliament. Thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: That is one suggestion and one way of looking at it, but there are other ways of looking at this problem. As I say, it is becoming a perennial problem. We went through a similar problem and we have to stop that.

HON. BRIMA MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, even though my colleague said we should continue with the debate, I want to consider it as a gross disrespect for this House *[Applause]*. I suggest that we stand down this House for thirty minutes and allow them to come within the thirty minutes. A correspondence has been sent for quite a long time I know the difference between an hour and thirty minutes. If they do not come, we will take the necessary actions against them.

THE SPEAKER: I have heard you, Honourable Member. May I invite the Leader of Government Business and the Acting Leader of the Opposition to come forward please? Honourable Members, after consultations, I will stand down the proceedings of Parliament for one hour.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I want to say something.

THE SPEAKER: No sir. With the greatest respect to you Honourable Member, I have consulted and I am quite satisfied with the consensus we have reached at.

HON. BILLOH M. SHAW: Mr Speaker, this is why MDAs are not taking Members of Parliament serious. We should not be seen continuously doing the same thing.

THE SPEAKER: I have not given the Floor to any Member and I want decorum in the House. I have just been advised that we are live on SLBC and I am using that channel to communicate to the MDAs that we are standing down for one hour in the expectation that all the MDAs concern will send very senior representatives to this Parliament to witness the proceedings. We stand down for one hour and we shall recommence at 12:00 noon. I want the same number of Members of Parliament who are in this Well to be here again.

[The House was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. and resumed at 12:20 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before we commence the proceedings, I would like the Clerk to take an inventory of all the MDAs that are now represented in this Well.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. You have exhibited a position that is very magnanimous by adjourning the House, so that MDAs can be present. However, I want to state here that notwithstanding your effort to ensure that the various representatives of MDAs are here, consistent with best practice, we should have discovered even those who have arrived here. It is a clear indication to show that Members of the Civil Service or the MDAs have no respect for this House *[Applause]*. I can also simply argue that they have no respect for the Government they work for *[Applause]*. In years gone by, we simply could not even dream of not adhering to the call of Mr Speaker, but today, it appears that Parliament is a laughing stock. Nobody cares if the Speaker invites you to Parliament and radio announcement is put on air. Even when the information was circulated, nobody has the gumption to adhere to the Speaker's call. We on this side feel very bitter and angry that the MDAs, whom we approved to become holders of public offices, have no respect for this House. We are now running into serious difficulty as to whether to continue the debate or we simply come to the conclusion that if the MDAs have refused to cooperate, we all park our bundles and go home *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is becoming more difficult for us to even control some of our own Members of Parliament because you adjourned for a period that was more than one hour. We patiently sat here and waited for them. As far as I am concerned, they did not turn up and this is a clear indication that they have no respect for the Office of Mr Speaker. We will not accept this Mr Speaker and we will not continue to adhere to this kind of anomaly, which means that instead of us continuously asking them to do what

they cannot do, we may be compelled to move a Motion about the various leaderships of these MDAs. If the leaderships of these MDAs cannot run their own institutions, then we have no sympathy for them. We have some time to think about it and move a Motion to prove that holders of public offices who are in charge of MDAs are unable to run their offices. We will move a Motion in order to stop this nonsense. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I take due note of what you have said, Mr Acting Leader of the Opposition. Your expression of concern is well taken and I want us do two things; first, let us ask all those who are in the Well representing MDAs to please rise and identify themselves. Mr Clerk, I want an inventory to be taken. The second thing is that let the Clerk summon the Secretary to the Cabinet, who is head of the Civil Service to Parliament this very moment. I have tried to call him directly, but he is not picking my calls *[Applause]*. In the meantime, we will proceed with the debate on the understanding that when he comes, you will have every opportunity to tell him what you wish to tell him.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, we quite appreciate the fact you are asking us to proceed with the debate, but you adjourned this House hoping that they will listen to you because you are the symbol of Authority in this House. If S.O. [2] 'den say, wi no dae kam dae, una do waetin una wan do.' Let us do what we believe is right *[Applause]*. They did not say it, but their actions reflect what I have just said. Let us do the needful. If they do not come today, let them know that because they failed to come, we did not debate and they will face your wrath. When the Secretary to Cabinet come here, we will ask him to pass an order that all of them should come to Parliament because all the moneys they control in those MDAs are approved in this Well. They are supposed to come for the debate after the Presidential Speech in order for them to know the trajectory the President has defined for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think they ought to know better and my Vice Principal back in the days used to tell me that the worse anybody can tell you is that 'you ought to know better.' I am telling them now that they ought to know better because they are Civil and Public Servants. They are supposed to be here to listen to Members of Parliament because a statement by the President is a policy statement and all of those issues are

related to the MDAs. Mr Speaker, let us stop the debate if they do not come. That is my take *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: You make a very powerful case, but with little flaws. I want concrete evidence of what you have just indicated. I have not heard them say that they are not coming and we are free to decide whatever we wish. I have asked the Clerk to telephone and invite the Secretary to the Cabinet who is the head of the Civil Service to this Chamber. I want to know if that has been done. We have adequate sanctions in the Constitution and the S.Os, but I will tread rather carefully in invoking those sanctions. Allow me to run this place. I have asked for the head of the Civil Service to come, but while we await his arrival, we will proceed with the debate.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to commence the debate on the speech delivered by His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio on the occasion of State Opening of Parliament... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, Honourable Member. Let me have the list of the MDAs that are present. I want to announce the names present. Mr Clerk, where is the list? I am waiting for the list of the MDAs that are present.

HON. OSMAN W. JALLOH: Mr Speaker, I suggest that the MDAs stand up and introduce themselves because it seems as if the list is still going round.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Please stand up and identify yourselves and the MDA you represent.

HON. OSMAN W. JALLOH: Mr Speaker, the list could be deceptive and that was why I suggested that they stand and introduce themselves *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I have been presented with a list. I will call them by name, designation and the MDA. Fatmata S. Mustapha, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Moses Kamara, Senior Human Resource Officer, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mohamed Jalloh, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources, Mrs J.C. Jones, Permanent Secretary, Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice, Mustapha Fofanah, Special Executive Assistant to the Chairman, National Commission for Democracy. Augustine Tejan Mansaray, Director, Cooperate Services,

Public Service Commission, AIG Mustapha Kamara, Sierra Leone Police. Issa Kamara, SLHSU.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: I want to advise my colleagues not to misuse the microphones because I noticed that everybody wants to talk.

THE SPEAKER: I hope I have the mechanism that overrides all your microphones. You have been warned not to overuse your microphones. I have the capacity here to override it. Please try to put your microphones on. I want to experiment something *[Laughter]*. I have not been able to identify the Honourable Member who has been causing that obstruction, but I will refer you to the S.Os and if you are not careful, I will ask you out of this Chamber. There should be decorum in this House and we are dealing with a very serious matter and I do not want any Member trying to trivialise what we are trying to do. Mr Issa Kamara, what is your designation please?

MR ISSA KAMARA: Finance Officer, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Frankly, I think you fall below the level expected of this Parliament, so you may inform your MDA that we need somebody of a higher status than your good self. Honourable Members, we have tomorrow and the day after, and I want us to proceed with the debate today, while we await the attendance of the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to come. We would deal with that issue when we reach there. In the meantime, we proceed with the debate.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute on the Speech delivered by His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio on the occasion of the State Opening of the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 2nd May, 2019.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, such speech is normally a tradition that each year, His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Members of Parliament and other Sierra Leoneans would gather in Parliament for the Presidential Address and of course in such Speech you would expect the President to catalogue the things he has done over the period and to tell the nation what his Government hope to achieve in the future. Of course, on that occasion His Excellency the President was able to clearly tell this House

and the country, since it was an occasion of the Second Session, what he has done for the past twelve months, how he met the Economy and what actions his Government has taken to address those issues. I have heard many a time people saying that we should not refer to the past or talk about twelve months back, but it is very important. It is imperative that as a President, if you want to explain what you have done, you lay the basis. In His Excellency's Speech, he said when he took over the country, the Economy was very imbalance and it was in a very bad shape. We had bloated expenditure that helped to cripple the Economy. The Economy was in a very bad shape and it has been said by His Excellency the President that in living memory in this country was the worst economic crisis ever in the history of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, external and domestic debts stood at **\$1.5bln** and **4.9tln** respectively. Again, arrears to contractors are about **636.4mln**. This is unbelievable for God's sake. We were just incurring all sorts of debts with colossal amounts. The arrears to be paid to institutions are unsustainable. The lack of confidence in the Economy by the international community, for example, the International Monetary Funds and the World Bank was so high that at some point they had to pull out. The extended credit facility was suspended to this country and the Economy was in shamble. That was what His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio and his Government inherited from the APC Government, under the Former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Mr Speaker, because Government was unable to pay salaries, it depended on bank borrowing. So, as soon as this President took over, he put mechanisms in place to ensure that the Economy is revived.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Executive Orders the President issued was about the Single Treasury Account [STA]. We all know that there are MDAs that collect revenue for Government and in the past Administration, those moneys were kept by these MDAs while the central Government was starving. So, His Excellency the President ordered that all moneys collected are paid into to the CRF, so that the Government would have moneys to pay salaries and other services. The President placed a ban on the sporadic and pervasive tax waivers. These were some of the ways through which this country was losing a lot of revenue. So, these moneys are now remitted into the CRF. With all of these measures, we saw an upsurge in domestic revenue mobilisation through the National

Revenue Authority [NRA]. Today, the Government is able to mobilise enough resources to pay salaries without recourse to bank borrowing. The wage bill in this country is very huge and I want to state here Government is not just there to pay salaries. I am sure there are other developmental activities the Government is also undertaking. We have arrears and other debts to pay. Again, salary payment in every month takes trunk of our moneys to the extent that it is very difficult to embark on other developmental activities. However, with all of these measures being put in place by the President and his Government, we were able to pay salaries without recourse to increasing our debts burden. If we rely on bank borrowing, definitely our debt will increase and the President does not want that to happen.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have people who are qualified and they are being put in those places to manage the Economy and we are moving ahead. His Excellency the President and his team went to UN and the IMF and they were able to conclude all negotiations. You will agree with me that they have promised to restart all those activities and money has been given to Government to continue supporting the budget. That is the confidence the International Community has in this Government due to the seriousness of His Excellency the President and the Government [*Applause*]. In all of those, the President was magnanimous enough to accept, despite all the physical reforms and challenges with our currency against the dollar. The Leone is depreciating mainly as a result of the drop in the price of iron ore. Again, everything we do in this country, even to pay rent, people will ask for dollars and that is another key problem responsible for the drop in the value of the Leones.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another major problem is the fact that we still have some unpatriotic Sierra Leoneans who are offshore, but trading in our foreign exchange. The Government is aware of these problems and we are taking concrete steps to solve those problems. For instance, the President said that his Government will begin to clamp down on suspected individuals who are offshore, manipulating our currency. Secondly, his Government will encourage production and we all know that this is not basically an SLPP problem. Government took frantic steps through the Bank of Sierra Leone to solve the problem. Auction of the dollar was done couple of times, but that was a short term measure and we need long term measures to solve all these problems. We have to

encourage ourselves by engaging in production, so that we will create more jobs and even export to earn foreign exchange *[Applause]*. Because of that, there are lots of activities on-going in all other sectors or other Ministries. If we have pressures on our Leone and we are dependent on importation, of course it will definitely affect the prices of goods and services. Government has equally taken concrete steps to ensure that we produce, so that our Leone is valued again. Mr Speaker, while these are on-going, Government is pragmatic enough to take concrete actions to solve the other problems.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is a manifesto promised by His Excellency the President that he would separate the Ministry of Planning and Economic development from that of the Ministry Finance. I want to report to this House it has been done and the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development is basically engaged in capital development and planning, while the Ministry of Finance is engaged in fiducial activities and other related matters. The Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has looked at a number of pillars through which the Economy of this country can be planned. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I may want to name but a few. Agenda on the eight pillars are as follows: 'Human Capital Development Diversifying the Economy and Promoting Growth, Infrastructural Economy Competiveness, Governance and Accountability for result Empowering Women, Children and Adolescent, Person's with Disabilities, Youth Empowerment, Support and Migration, Addressing Irregularities and Rebuilding Resilience and the means of implementation *[Applause]*. All these are concrete pillars which the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development has identified through which we can be able to get our Economy back on foot.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Government is doing well in all the other sectors, like Agriculture. The objective of Government is to attained food self-sufficiency and to create and increase productivity. We all know that it is only through the Ministry that we can be able to get a stable Economy. Therefore, a lot of efforts have been directed to the Ministry of Agriculture, which has attracted international organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organisation [FAO], International Forum for Agricultural Development [IFAD] and other institutions. They are spending huge sums of money to ensure that they turn around the Agriculture sector, so that it can be viable and be able to produce enough to export.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Human Capital Development is one of the key objectives of this Government. Therefore, we have seen the basic and primary school education. The President promised that he was going to launch the Free Quality Education and he has done it *[Applause]*. That is a laudable venture and it is an ambitious project which takes chunk of the resources of Sierra Leone. It is indeed economically viable for parents with three or four children who are going to school. This is project will help them to save more moneys that could have been spent on school matters. Government has committed **21%** of the GDP on education and we have witnessed the payment of school fee subsidies which is in billions to school authorities. We have seen the provision of teaching and learning materials to schools, construction of schools and the revamping the School Feeding Programme in schools. That has encouraged the children to stay in school and the project has started in some districts in this country. The President did not say the Free Quality Education was going to be perfect, but the fact of the matter is that it has been launched and the project is on-going *[Applause]*. I am sure we will be amending areas where there are challenges. In fact, the area where the school feeding programme is on-going is in the northern region *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President and his Government under the Free Quality Education are very conscious of the importance of teachers. Therefore, basic increments have been made for teachers. However, the Government is willing to engage the Sierra Leone Teachers Union [SLTU] in all discussions as to how they could resolve the welfare of teachers. For over ten years, the past Government did not recruit a single teacher to the best of my knowledge, but rather the Minister of Education was busy finding ghost teachers. At some point, there was no moment the former Minister came to this Well to explain to Members of Parliament how many ghost teachers he discovered, because we were interested in that and in carrying his activities, he did not approve a single teacher. Under the 'New Direction,' we have been able, through the Teaching Service Commission, to recruit a couple of teachers and we will ensure that trained and qualified teachers are employed, so that the Free Quality Education becomes a reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another campaign message was the creation of the Tertiary Education Ministry. Government was able to create this Ministry, so that the Ministry will focus mainly on the Tertiary and Vocational Education system. This was done,

so that Government will provides the required oversight on those institutions. Therefore, we have seen situations where this Ministry has acquired a lot of resources to provide vocational education, which is very important. It is equally important because the middle man power training where people will be able to use their hands to ensure service delivery was lacking. I want to state here this Government, under the Leadership of Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, has been able to secure funds to provide for vocational education in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education has been able to waive application fee for 2018/2019 academic year *[Applause]*. It is no secret that Government spent over **5bln** across the country and I am pleased to inform you that those refunds have been paid *[Applause]*. Government has equally given Grant-in-Aids to students who are pursuing special courses like Chemistry, Science, Physic, Nursing, etc. *[Applause]*. The Ministry of Higher and Technical Education is doing very well. The Eastern region is the only region without a University in this country. We were here when the last Parliament pleaded and we worked with the Eastern Region Polytechnic Administration to ensure that we put the necessary modalities in place for the Eastern Region to be granted a University, but that did not happen under Former President, Dr Earnest Bai Koroma. The reason could not be too far from the fact that the Eastern Region is predominantly SLPP and we were denied that opportunity *[Applause]*. There are universities in all other regions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to inform this House that during his tenure, he even established the Earnest Bai Koroma University, which was a transformation, but they refused to transform the Eastern Polytechnic into a University status. The documents were prepared to amend the University Act, but it did not happen. However, during the President's thank you tour to the Eastern Region, particularly Kenema District, he made a policy statement to the people of Kenema that he would establish a University for the people of Eastern Region. As we speak, a University of Science has been launched in Kono *[Applause]*. We are however asking for a transformation of the Eastern Polytechnic into a University and the President has given his word that the Eastern Polytechnic would be transformed into a University. Thus, on behalf of Members of Parliament from Kenema District and the entire Eastern Region, we want to encourage the

Minister of Higher Education, Professor Aiah Gbakima to ensure that the dreams of the people of the Eastern Region, the policy statement made by His Excellency the President is actualised *[Applause]*. We urge him to work with the Administration of the Eastern Polytechnic to transform the Eastern Polytechnic into a University as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the health situation in this country was very catastrophic and we saw what happened during the Ebola scourge. When the Ebola struck, it exposed Sierra Leone's health situation in a very ugly way. So, the health care system is very critical in every Government. The objective of the President is to reform the health sector and make it efficient and effective for service delivery. Therefore, this Government has embarked on a lot of reforms as far as the health sector is concerned. Those abandoned ambulances referred to by the previous Administration were repaired and stationed in every district and chiefdom, and they can now boast of an ambulance service. During the launch of those projects, the Minister of health provided emergency numbers through which people could call for ambulance service *[Applause]*. A lot of health facilities have been provided and some have been refurbished, while others are under construction across the country. Therefore, service delivery in the health sector is comparatively better than it used to be. There was a Government that has been in power for over eleven years, yet they could not right those wrongs. In a period of one year, we have achieved so much. We are aware of the challenges and even magicians cannot address those in one year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind my colleagues on the other side that if their Government did very badly, it means they do not even have the impetus to criticise. Criticism is good, but we expect constructive criticism for the interest of the country. The health system has been much better under the 'New Direction' through the Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr Alpha T. Wurrie *[Applause]*. He has taken concrete steps to reform the health sector. Again, this Government has increased allocation to the health sector from **6% to 10%**, which is laudable. This Government has equally engaged in the recruitment of nurses; and for a very long time, we have nurses who were trained, but with no pin codes. However, some of them have been recruited and pin codes have been given to some of them. I am sure other motivational issues have been put in place. The training process is on-going and the health sector under the 'New Direction' is doing

very well. Service delivery is very effective now than any other time and the overall health situation in the country is much better than any other time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to roads infrastructure. If roads are not given the attention they need, they are impediment to development. In spite of the purported road projects in the past eleven years, it was marred with corruption through bloated road projects, poor implementation, problems between the agencies responsible to implement road projects, etc. Corruption was at every corner. The past regime had so many 'addendum' projects. Those were areas where corruption thrived. Again, most of the road projects in major towns were abandoned and they became nuisance to the community. Under the New Direction, however, the President and His Government decided to complete some of the roads in Freetown, Kenema, Bo and other districts in this country. In Kenema, for example, the Blama/Hanga Road Project is almost complete and the contractor is about commencing the Dama Road project, Maxwell-khobe Street Project and Koroma Street Projects. We suffered as a district because we were neglected and the roads were impassable as if the people of Kenema are not important. In other words, we were treated as if we were not part of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure we were neglected simply because they said 'Kenema is SLPP strong hold. For eleven years, they took a lot of road projects to other parts of the country, such as Makeni, Kabala and other parts of North. The point we want to underscore is that service delivery index should be equal and equitably distributed. Some of my colleagues who were in the last Parliament on the other side of the aisle can attest to the fact that we stood up to plead on behalf of Kenema concerning the appalling condition of the roads in Kenema, but nobody listened simply because Kenema is SLPP stronghold and no development should be taken to that region. With the coming of the SLPP Government under the Leadership of Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, the Blama Road Project is almost at it completion stage and the other roads have been contracted to the contractors. We want to be at par with other districts like Makeni, Magburaka, etc. Kenema was behind in terms of development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the tar project in Bo is only at the centre of the township and that is not something we will want to talk about. With all the roads they said

they have repaired or constructed, it accounts for something like **10%** of the overall roads situation in this country and we still have a huge task to do in terms of constructing those roads, so that development can reach the various localities and the farms where those crops can be taken to the cities. This was how development looked like and that was why we have not been able to win the millennium development. This is because if they find out that other district headquarter towns are impoverished, nobody will give you a passing mark as a nation. They will never grade you based on political parties, but on the statehood. As a country, it was good we had the Bintumani 3 Conference, even though our brothers on the other side boycotted.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard a lot of cries about what is happening now, but some of them were in this country when heinous things were being perpetrated and nobody condemned them. But I strongly believe that we should stick together as a people for the development of this country. I am saying this because we are one country and one people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government is committed to strengthening democratic institutions and we will ensure that democratic institutions are strengthened. Some of these democratic institutions are; Political Party Registration Commission [PPRC], National Election Commission [NEC], International Media Commission [IMC], National Commission for Democracy [NCD], the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation [SLBC], etc. We are committed to restoring the autonomy of these institutions, so that they function devoid of any political interference.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Government is more than serious to ensure that the overall development of this country is harnessed, so that we can move from the dewdrop from which we took this country. The 'New Direction' will ensure that we take this country to the promise land in the next four years. We promise the people and I want to inform my colleagues on other side that they are part of the governance of the state and they have a role to play. They should not always have to be destructive. Some of us want to support the Government to bring development into the country because it being said that when you want your President to fail, it is very unpatriotic because when your President fails and the citizens and the nation will also fail.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard a lot of innuendos about the governance system. During the one year anniversary celebration of this Government, people expected all the wrongs and maladministration in the past eleven years to be reversed in one year. We have to be honest with ourselves, but concrete steps have been taken by this Government to ensure that we solve these problems. We are on the right footing to ensure that the right thing happens. We are calling on the opposition, especially the APC to forget about this antagonising nature, so that we can work together and ensure that we make this country a better place. The Speech delivered by His Excellency the President on the 2nd May, 2019 is incredible. The President was very frank and some of us are expecting you to make constructive comments. On that note, I thank you very much for your audience *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for opening the debate on the presidential Address in this Parliament. Before I call on the next speaker on my list, I would like all of us to acknowledge the presence, in our midst, the Honourable Minister of Information and Communications *[Applause]*. We sent for the Secretary to the Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service to join us because of a very serious lapse that we observed at the beginning of this sitting. I understand that Mr John Sumaila is here. Please come forward. We have asked you to come because today was the day we had scheduled and announced for the commencement of the debate on the presidential Address to the House. In addition, we had caused it to be announced on the radio and other media outlets, inviting all heads of MDAs to ensure that they are present. We do not insist that all Ministers and heads should necessarily come, but we expect all MDAs to be represented by very senior level personnel, so that they could follow the debate and take notes for their Ministers who as you know, at the end of the debate, may be called upon to respond to the many statements, concerns and observations made by Honourable Members. To our dismay, however, we started this morning with hardly any notable senior members of the MDAs present, except the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Mrs Fatmata Mustapha. She was the only one who found it necessary as her duty to come. We have summoned you here because this is a very important matter and this House considers it extremely important that whenever we are debating the presidential Address, representations at a very high level from the MDAs are expected. We do not know why

there was such a noticeable lapse this morning, perhaps you would like to inform the House why that happened and to suggest ways that we could use in future to avoid a recurrence of such a lapse.

MR JOHN SUMAILA [*The Secretary to Cabinet*]: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I greet you all. I currently hold the office of Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service. I agree with the Honourable Speaker that during debates relating to budget and the presidential Address, all Permanent Secretaries and heads of departments are required to be present. It has been the norm over the years and I agree that our Permanent Secretaries are accustomed to this practice. That notwithstanding, I also recognise and apologise from the bottom of my heart for the conduct of what happened this morning, but going forward and in consonance with the issue the Honourable Speaker just mentioned on how we should be able to mitigate such occurrence, I would like to humbly present to this House that we issued normal circular to all Vote Controllers, even before the radio announcement. There may be a situation wherein perhaps the radio announcement was not heard by a good number of them, but if the circular is sent, there will be no excuse. The Speaker just mentioned that the news was all over. I will humbly suggest that we follow the circular memorandum first and then that will be followed by the radio announcement. I thank you for your attention.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Secretary to Cabinet. You mentioned that the norm before now was that heads of departments will attend Parliament when Parliament is debating either the budget or the presidential Speech. I cannot agree more. That being the case, frankly, does it really requires another notice to MDAs for them to realise that it is the norm for them to be present? What is important is once they know that a particular day has been scheduled as the day for the commencement of the debate, it is automatic that they should come. So, let us not hide behind the idea of notice or no notice, let us all agree that once a date has been scheduled and announced as the commencement date of the debate for either the presidential Address or the Budget, automatically we expect the heads of departments to be present. Can we agree on that, going forward?

MR JOHN SUMAILA: Honourable Speaker, I totally agree. My proposition was on the means of communication in terms of getting the notice, so that it will become well known

to them. They agreed to be here as long as they have the notification and perhaps the mode of notification needs to be looked at so that we can have all of them on board as soon as they know about it and it is incumbent on everybody to be here.

THE SPEAKER: In that regard, let me say that the debate will continue tomorrow and the day after, and I hope that will be regarded as sufficient notice.

MR JOHN SUMAILA: I commit myself to making sure that information is transmitted to everybody. There will be no excuse for anybody being absent.

THE SPEAKER: And going forward, notices will be given through the radio, television and other practicable means. Honourable Members, you have heard the Secretary to the Cabinet and head of the Civil Service. I hope what he has said and the apology he has made on behalf of the MDAs is acceptable. I thank you very much. We may now proceed with the debate. I will like to recognise the Honourable Alusine Bash Kamara.

HON. ALUSINE B. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Though it is not yet my time to speak, but because of your respect, I will adhere to your voice. I want to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for the presidential Address he delivered on the 2nd of May, 2019. The Address is 52 pages and 265 paragraphs. This shows that by next year, we are going to expect more paragraphs and more pages.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on for a moment, Honourable Member. For the benefit of Honourable Members, please take note that the debate was open by Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba and under S.O. 38; I gave him sufficient time as allowed in the S.O. All subsequent speakers will be allowed twenty minutes maximum and that will take us two hours because I earlier indicated that I will be taking three speakers from each side of the aisle.

HON. ALUSINE B. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I was saying that by next year, we could have more paragraphs and pages. In Paragraph 20, the President mentioned the ambulances under the Ministry of Health and Sanitation that barely provided services to the remote communities in this country. I agree with the President that the Minister of Health is fairly a listening Minister, because he reacts to the concerns of the people living in remote communities.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, allow your colleague to continue the debate.

HON. ALUSINE B. KAMARA: Thank you for protecting me. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Page 20, Paragraph 106, the President mentioned the distribution of fifty-eight ambulances in this country. I thank the Minister of Health and Sanitation because he listened to the cries of the ordinary people in this country. The people living in remote areas have suffered in terms of bad health conditions. There are lots of challenges in this sector and because of these challenges, I urge the Minister of Health to make sure that he addresses those challenges as soon as possible, so that the people in the remote communities will have equal opportunities to those in the bigger towns.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank His Excellency the President for appointing the two Ministers of Education, the President listens to the cries of the people in this nation. A lot of cries have been happening in the educational sector, particularly for the extension of the external exams. The Minister has provided additional centres *[Applause]*. I refer the House to Page 15, Paragraph 80. The President said he had eliminated the two shift systems in this country. Mr Speaker, if you go to Page 17, Paragraph 87, the President again said he was going to eliminate the two shift systems in the next couple of years. I am sure the President complicated himself.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, the man is lying.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, withdraw that statement please. Do not tell your colleague that he is lying. It is very un-parliamentary and I want you to withdraw that statement. Please, do not give me the cause to name you. I saw you and I heard you very clearly. That statement was un-parliamentary and you know that very well. I am not going to tolerate such utterance.

HON. ALUSINE B. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I said Page 15, Paragraph 80, the President said the two shifts system have been eliminated, but on Page 17, Paragraph 87 he also said that he was going to eliminate the two shifts system in the next few years. I think there is a contradiction in those two paragraphs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Kenema District just mentioned about the bad roads in that district. If you recall when the APC came to power in 2007, the first road the APC Government commissioned was the Kenema/Kailahun Road

[Applause]. I am sure billions of Leones were allocated in the last budget for the Makeni/Kamakwei road. As I speak, nothing has been done in that regard. Our people are suffering because of bad roads. The Honourable Member from Kenema said because the APC failed to construct roads in the South-East when they were in governance, our people are going to suffer because SLPP is now in governance. Mr Speaker, why should our people have to suffer because they are APC or because they voted for the APC?

THE SPEAKER: Hold on, what is your point of Order?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba is not on his seat now, but I will address the matter.

THE SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member did mention Kenema.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. ALUSINE B.KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Again, Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba said earlier that during the APC regime, they failed to construct roads in Kenema and that is why I said our people in the North are now suffering for roads and a clear example is the roads in Kamakwei. I am sure funds have been allocated for the construction of that road. Mr Speaker, I want to draw your attention to the roads linking Buya-Romende, Safroko and Kasseh. I want to thank the President for the removal of the Minister of Works from his position, because he has not done anything good for this nation during his period in office *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, feasibility studies has been done for Kasseh/Buya Road, but nothing has happened. Are those people suffering because they voted APC and because they are Northerners? I am only referencing what my learned friend said. I am sure what is happening now is a revenge, as earlier posited by my colleague on the other side.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw the attention of this House to issues relating to local governance. The Ministry of Local Government has done a lot of harm within this one year. It has done a lot of division among the local authorities. When my brother was talking about the former Government in terms of vetting teachers, this

particular Ministry has the mandate to review local authorities, but the postponement of local elections for the Paramount Chiefs was a very big mistake. I want to inform the Minister of Local Government that our people are tired of being divided because lot of money has been involved in the process, but nothing has happened in that Ministry *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, we want our people to conduct their elections, so that they can have political authorities in their places. If those elections are not conducted in the shortest period, then it is recipe for unrest in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Ministry of Youth Affairs. The Minister of Youth Affairs told us that they have trained about 510 youth in this country, but I want to call the attention of this Ministry that all what they have done was just for Freetown, Bo and Kenema. What about the youth in our villages or the youth in the remote areas? What about the youth in the North? Nothing has been done in the North. The Ministry is only arresting people and taken them to Criminal Investigations Department [CID] or to the Anti-Corruption Commission and nothing has been done. Now, they are saying they have trained over 500 youth in this country and I totally disagree with that statement made by the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture is only roaming at Youyi Building and the Ministry is not contributing anything to the farmers. The Minister and his team are sitting in Freetown, writing lots of projects, but with no implementation. We have however seen lots of figures concerning what they have done. I challenge them and even Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella can attest to the fact that there is no work taking place in his community. His place is one of the fertile areas for rice cultivation. When the Speaker of this House was the Minister of Agriculture, he was the master farmer in 1982 and he had the biggest farm in this country. However, I can attest to the fact that the current Minister of Agriculture does not have a farm. The President has mentioned in this Well that whosoever fails to have a farm will not be a Minister. What about the Minister of Agriculture? What has he done? I am saying it and I want him to come here.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have two minutes.

HON. ALUSINE B. KAMARA: On that note, I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. He is my Member of Parliament and he is very Honourable. I recognise Honourable Mustapha Sellu.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to first of all thank God for giving the President the knowledge, wisdom and understanding for the Speech he graciously delivered in this Well on the 2nd May, 2019. I want to thank my colleagues Honourable Members on the other side who has just spoken very well, though he has not sufficient proof, but I want to encourage him to make more research before coming to this Well. I am saying this because we do not want him to misinform the people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my debate this afternoon will focus on the Economy of this nation. I therefore refer you to Page 1, Paragraph 4 of the presidential Speech. It is very clear to this nation and to us, as parliamentarians, that this Government inherited a battered Economy. The expenditure far exceeded the revenue collected and that is largely due to bloated expenditure, which is one of the reasons we inherited a shattered Economy. We cannot talk of development without strong Economy.

THE SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order, Honourable Member?

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: I just want to advise the Leader of Government Business to listen to the mode of the debate from his own side and that is very important for us to have peace and concord here. We need to look at the debating system.

THE SPEAKER: Carry on, Honourable Member, but please take heed.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Noted, Mr Speaker. I speak from the point of authority. The ratio of domestic revenue of the GDP was **12.6%** and total expenditure was **24.1%** in 2017, an excess of **11.5%**. That is something I want you to underline here and it has dropped from **8.7%** in 2017 to **5.4%** in 2018 [*Applause*]. This is as a result of the robust and disciplined leadership of the President and his team, especially the National Revenue Authority [NRA] and Ministry of Finance. There is no magic, but a disciplined leadership. Domestic revenue collected in 2018 increased to **Le3.5tln**, which is about **14%** of the GDP, as compared to **Le3.4tln**, **12.6%** of GDP in 2017. I am comparing 2017 and 2018 because the problems in 2018 cannot be squarely blamed on the SLPP because we took power in the second quarter of 2018. The first half of 2018 was partly APC, but we will not

go into that. I will give you more update or details about 2018, moving to March, 2019 *[Applause]*. For argument sake, that is why I have brought this to you because if you keep debating what we achieved in 2018, you will want to bring us back to your own achievement in the first quarter; i.e., January to March, 2018. We took power in April, 2019 and that is why I want to make it very clear for the edification of the public and Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have collected **Le5.09tln** of domestic revenue, thereby giving a monthly average of **Le424bln**. This amount is far above the **Le278bln** in 2017. I refer you to Page 2, Paragraph 5 of the presidential Speech. I want to make it very clear that I am comparing 2017 and 2018, and move where we are now. That is why I am giving you the variance in terms of quantity and percentage. If you look at the average monthly collection of **Le278bln** in 2017 and **Le424bln** in 2018, the variance is **146bln**. These gains are as a result of disciplined leadership. From March, 2018 to April 2019, a total duty waiver was estimated at **Le389.9bln**, as compared to **Le488.54bln** from March, 2017 to April 2018, representing **26.5%**. We want to thank His Excellency the President, the NRA and Minister of Finance for such a wonderful and tremendous gain we have achieved so far in this country *[Applause]*. I want to state here that it is too early to measure the achievements of a Government that is one year old. I am sure we cannot measure the achievements of this Government until we have spent half of the five years in office. This is the only country where we see the opposition pray and fast for the ruling Government to fail. I want to state here if Sierra Leone fails, it is all of us and nobody has a special Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer you to Page 5, Paragraph 24. This is another huge challenge faced by this present Government. As at December, 2018 external debts stood at **Le1.5bln** and domestic debts stood at **Le4.9tln**. Presently, this Government, under the 'New Direction,' we have spent up to **Le101bln** as monthly salaries. The internal debts represent **85%** of our national domestic revenue generated monthly. Mr Speaker, for the edification of the public, this is why people are saying, S.O [2], the gron dry.' Can you imagine a Government spending **Le101bln** every month on salaries and internal debts of **85%** of the total revenue generated monthly. Therefore, only **15%** is left for development, but we are still running this Government effectively. We are paying

salaries on time and other development projects are on-going [*Applause*]. I want this nation to know that Government has reduced domestic borrowing for financing the budget to **564.71bln** in 2018 to **1.2tln** in 2017. This is a downward reduction of **44%** and in one year. We have not reverted to bank borrowing to finance our budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want this nation to know that we cannot talk about development in this country without funds. I want everybody to know that we have not received a cent from international community as budgetary support. As we speak, plans are underway for us to receive funds, but I want to inform this House that the funds we are using are coming from the domestic revenue we generate through the robust management systems put in place by this Government and the effective leadership of the NRA and Ministry of Finance. This is why we are enjoying what we are doing as a Government. With your leave, I refer you to Page 52, Paragraph 265 of the presidential Speech. It says: **"one year in office has gone too quickly, but the achievements we have made are laying the solid foundation for not only sustainable development, but also restoring our international reputation."** You can all agree with me that this nation has suffered a lot from international disgrace and public ridicule. This Government is trying to cleanse this nation through what we call national laundering. I listened to one of our Ambassadors in Russian who was molested because he said he was from Sierra Leone. There was an issue between the former Ambassador and the Russians, and reputation of this country has been stained and tinted with corruption. This Government is committed to the fight against corruption and you can agree with me that **8%** of the population in the villages and towns are aware of the fight against corruption. That is a very huge achievement this Government has made so far in one year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about development in the Ministry of Youth, which my colleague cited. He said that the Ministry of Youth Affairs is implementing projects just within the Western Areas.' There is an adage which says, 'interest is the soil on which knowledge grows.' In the Western Area and some urban cities, you will realise that there are on-going projects under the Minister of Youth. We have the 'car-wash project' and that project is limited only in the urban towns because the youth in those urban towns and cities participate in such activity. They have taken that activity as their source of livelihood. You cannot take the 'car wash project,' for instance, in my village,

where nobody will go to wash his/her car. I want to make that very clear to this nation and to Members of Parliament that that particular statement lacks substance. We are here not to misinform the people, but to ensure that they are adequately informed. The project is on-going in the Western Area and other urban cities, irrespective of region or the area you come from. I can attest to that and the general public can also attest to the fact that the project is on-going under.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to encourage all and sundry to come on board and put hands on deck because what we are doing as a Government is not just for SLPP, but it is the foundation we are building. We want to stabilise the Economy for any successful Government that will come in future to be able to move this country forward. I thank you very much for your audience and I hope all of us will put all hands on deck for the betterment of Sierra Leone *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. He has made a very judicious use of the time allocated to him and he saved us five minutes from his twenty minutes. I will now recognise the Honourable Paul S. Sam.

HON. PAUL S. SAM: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President of this nation, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for a very good Address delivered on the 2nd May, 2019. I think we must look at Sierra Leone as a nation in every segment of our responsibility to actually give our physical and mental supports to the things that gear towards the development of this country. That is why we are here as Members of Parliament to give our own support because we are representing the people of this country. I am sure if we are representing the people in our different constituencies, I think they are expecting us to give what is happening in the country. They should know what is going in the governance structure of the state, as well as in the opposition. I am sure that will help the Government to succeed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President for appointing the former Minister of Planning and Development. Both the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Development were considered as one Ministry, but the President, in his good will, separated them into two. The fiscal aspect has to be managed by the Ministry of Finance and the development aspect has to be handled by the Ministry of Planning and

Development. Within a very short period in office, he was able to put together development of policies. This is a very good one because we cannot develop a nation without having sound policies to enhance the Government's productivity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about developing the child poverty report which is a very good. He also mentioned the development cooperation framework and that is also fantastic. He also promised to develop the population policies. This means that if you want to develop a country, you need to know the population strength from every part of the country before you can be able to plan. That is what the then Minister has done for this country and it is a very good plan. I want to tap the former Minister of Planning and Development *[Applause]*. She also provided development framework which highlighted several areas, ranging from the empowerment of the youth, women, disability and other vulnerable groups. These are frameworks the Minister put together to help the governance system and to ensure that the President succeeds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Agriculture and I will use IFAD as example. IFAD is operating with Government, so as to ensure that they complement the efforts of Government. If you go back to one of the sectors, like the financial services, we have the community banks where farmers can access credit facilities, but that is not visible in the rural areas. The reason is that, bank loans are paid on monthly basis and you cannot give a farmer loan and expect them to be paying at the end of every month until they harvest their produce. The Government needs to put some measures in place. If IFAD succeeds, the farmers need to have annual loans, so that they will be able to pay at the end of every farming period, when they will be harvesting their crops *[Applause]*. I want to say Kudos to them for the feeder roads because those roads provide access to the farmers to access the market centres where they can sell their products. This will discourage our farmers from taking our produce to Guanine for sale. It will not help our Economy to grow and there is also a problem between the crop farmers and the cattle rearers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to some villages, you will find out that the young and dynamic men are leaving the villages because ranches are too rampant and the settlement policies are not followed. That is why there are conflicts between the cattle

rearers and the crop farmers. There should be a strong policy to guide the settlement of each and every ranch and that will help the farmers to also produce our staple food and other crops. That is in a reverse because if you go to some villages, farmers are deprived because ranches are all over and the rangers do not have cowboys to manage their cattle. This affects the production of crops and also has an effect on the bread and butter issue which the Government is talking about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the flagship programmes of the President is the Free Quality Education and we want to tap the President on the back for what he has done in this country. We need to advise the Minister of Education to take some of these measures I want to unfold for his own edification. I am sure if these measures are applied, they will help the Government. I want to be grateful for the two thousand teachers who have already been selected for approval, but if you look at the foundation of education, it starts at the primary school level. I am sure all the university students must have gone through pre-school, Primary and Secondary School systems. But when you look at the subsidy for primary schools, it is **Le10, 000** for every child, JSS is **Le50, 000** per child and SSS is **Le60, 000**. If a particular school has a population of **2,000** pupils, but was given **Le2mln** to manage the affairs of that school for quarter, it will compromise the Free Quality Education the President is aspiring to provide *[Applause]*. The President or Minister of Education needs to look at that foundation because if the teachers are not encouraged at that level, nothing serious will take place. There are teachers with pin codes, but we still have some who are volunteer teachers who are equally qualified. They do not have pin codes and if **2mln** is shared among those volunteer teachers, it would not be enough for even five or six of them in that particular school. I want to call on the Minister to increase the subsidies to Primary Schools *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that most of the community schools are in remote areas and there are kids who are unable to walk every day to these schools because of the distance. I think we need to ensure that the community schools are not too far from our towns. We also need to bring qualified teachers to manage those schools and also help our kids in our communities. The Minister of Education has promised to ensure that teachers with BECE qualification in remote areas are approved. According to the Minister, those teachers were asked to attend the teachers' training colleges within three

years, but they are now catering for teachers with Teachers' Certificate. Mr Speaker, because of the first message that was sent to those schools, they have been closed because the teachers do not have the required qualifications for them to be approved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the presidency of the late President, Dr Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, he looked at some of those schools and approved the teachers who are not qualified and asked them to go to teachers training colleges. They used their backlogs and salaries to pay their fees. It is very difficult to ask a trained and qualified teacher to go and teach in remote villages. Although in the Speech the President, he spoke about giving allowances to teachers who will be going to those remote villages and other teachers who will be teaching Science subject and French. He promised to provide incentives to those teachers, which is a laudable venture. They however need to look at that very critically because most of those schools have been closed down because the teachers are running away. They are running away because they have been told that they would not be approved. It would have been good for the presence of the Minister of Education or the Permanent Secretary or the Chief Education Officer to listen to this information *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about the closure of the iron ore mining and the fluctuation in terms of the exchange rate. The Governor at one time gave **\$2mln** auction to stabilise the Economy, but that is not the actually thing. If the President can bring to speed what he has said in his address that iron ore mining will start soon, I think that will help the situation. We need to revive the Economy very fast because when the exchange rate is higher, the transportation will also increase and when that happens, the traders will also increase prices of their commodities. Our people in the villages will also feel the pain and that is why people are always saying, S.O.[2] 'dae gron dry and dae gron e dry wan' does not actually hinge on the economy, but the President needs to speed up the issue of the iron ore, cocoa and coffee production. These will bring revenue for the Government, but if you do not sell your cocoa and coffee outside, even the dollar you take to buy goods will remain in that country. However, if the raw materials are exported, they will bring the dollar back to your country and that will help to stabilise the Economy. So, the President needs to be very proactive, so that these sectors start to function.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with these few words, I want to thank you for your audience.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution and for his very judicious use of the time allocated to him.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank, you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before my colleague from the C4C took the Floor, I was with my pen for almost twenty minutes, hoping to get good information from other colleagues who have spoken before me, but I was disappointed because they made little or no sense. Let me go to the first speaker from Kenema, who mentioned series of issues. I will try not to be controversial today *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, the first speaker said the government has paid salaries without recourse to bank overdraft. As a child growing up, what I expect is food, but where the money comes from I do not ask. What the people of Sierra Leone want is salaries to be paid on time and not the source *[Applause]*. I can recall during my first two months in this Parliament, I was paid before the 30th of each month. As I speak, I am not even sure if I will have salary on the 4th of next month *[Applause]*. When my colleague said salaries are paid on time, I ask myself if the time of paying salaries has been shifted to 7th of the following month. If yes, I wish to thank the President Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, the President spoke about the STA and I am sure when people spend their time in offices, they want other people to give them accolades for the time well spent. As Honourable Member of Parliament, I know what it takes, risking my life, going all round my constituency and after my five years, I want my people to recognise the good things I have done. Let us stop talking about the STA without giving accolades to the person who initiated that idea *[Applause]*. The Speech of the President is telling us that only nine MDAs are using the STA. If you look at the handling over note of the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, it was nine MDAs. This means that there is a reduction of one MDA and it is not progressing in anyway *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, modern economists will tell you that giving multinational institutions tax waivers is a good way to encourage them to come to your country *[Applause]*. It is never a crime to give these companies tax waivers and because we think we are going to put up stringent measures,

and we have increased taxation on our own people, the companies are not just doing well, but this is this why S.O. [2] 'dae gron dry' *[Applause]*. The dollar is going up every day. I am sure there is a difference between economist and 'talknomist.' Before elections what we envisaged in this country was 'talknomist.' People told us that they would bring the dollar down in six months, but with all the auction of the dollar, by next week you will not be surprised to hear that that **\$100** is equivalent to **Le1mln.**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the health sector. When the Honourable Member from Kenema was talking, I gave accolade to the Honourable Members on the other side of the aisle. They did not applaud him because they knew what he was saying was not sacrosanct and was not correct. When you talk about ambulance system in this county, you cannot wipe the name of the former President who brought them. Mr Speaker, to repair an ambulance does not mean you bought it. Let us give honour to the person who builds the system *[Applause]*. I am sure the Kinghaman Road hospital is a clear example.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the acoustic of that building is very good and you do not need to shout *[Laughter]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I am not shouting. It is just that I am emotionally touched because what my colleague stated was not fact and I am stating the facts. The people have evidence of infrastructural development in the health sector from Waterloo to Lumley, Kingharman Road, Macauley Street, Rokupa, etc. *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to road construction. There are certain facts you cannot take away from certain people and the people of Sierra Leone will not stop giving accolades to a living prophet, His Excellency the Former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma *[Applause]*. He also mentioned the fair time being given by SLBC, but they have never given us fair time. Can the operations of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation give us equal opportunity to air out our views?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the youth sector, the President told us in Paragraph 111 that the youth constitutes **63%** of the Economically active population in this country and **67%** are unemployed; and in other to address the needs of unemployed youth, shamefully we are talking about creating ten 'car wash.' This is an insult to us, as young

people in this country. I am not here to talk about what passed before me, but I came into politics to set the records straight. If you are here as Honourable Members, let us make Sierra Leone great. Please in your undertones do not talk about what happened yesterday. Mr Speaker, if there is time in this country in which every chiefdom and district is complaining about the youth sector, it is the just concluded election which I called imposition of youth leaders across the country. You heard from the Member of Parliament from Kono and other Members of Parliament from Falaba, Koinadugu, Port Loko and Kambia districts where youth were brought from other chiefdoms to vote.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 34[1]. It says: **“Any Member deviating from the provision of this Order may be immediately called to order by Mr Speaker or the Chairman.”** He is deviating and we are not talking about youth elections here. We are talking about the presidential Speech. Youth election is something different and there is nothing about election of youth in this Speech.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I will invite you to read S.O.34 again. Carry on, Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We are fortunate as young people to have you as the Speaker, not just to moderate this Parliament, but to learn from your wisdom and patience *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, Page 21, Paragraph 112 of the Speech talks about the Youth Service and Youth Corp across the country from one region to the other. The purpose is to build national cohesion and to support Government programmes. I will draw on just one single phrase, ‘national cohesion.’ The manner in which youth elections were conducted are not conducive atmosphere for national cohesion; the manner in which people are being sacked with no reasons makes no room for national cohesion. I pity people like you who have reputation in the history of the world to work in a regime which will be condemned for dividing this nation *[[Applause]*. Today is a common philosophy in sierra Leone and it is now common to say S.O.[2], ‘na wi turn.’ The question is, are we aware of the seeds we are sowing as Sierra Leoneans against one another? Are we aware of the fact that we are dividing our country? Interestingly, those who are shouting are below forty years. Unfortunately, unlike the

Speaker, you have to reap what you will sow. The Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella used to say... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, thank you for reminding some of us about our age, but I am not hard of hearing *[Laughter]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I was just referring to the warnings Honourable Kandeh K. Yumkella used to give us. He used to say that this Parliament should be serious because majority of us are young people and whatever we do today will hurt us tomorrow. If we are serious about national cohesion the young people in this Parliament will speak about it and understand the ramifications in the present political trend.

THE SPEAKER: I missed you so much over the weekend and I wish you had attended *[Laughter]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I want to look at Bintumani 3. I am an expert in peace, but I do not own a first degree in it. I own a diploma in peace and I am very peaceful. I am a Peace Ambassador. Mr Speaker, Bintumani 3 did not just take place at the wrong time, but the communication was very deceiving. At one point, we were talking about a peace meeting at Bintumani and everybody was expecting political parties to attend and make their positions. Regrettably, I saw my brother chairing a session instead of making a position on behalf of the NGC. I thought it was going to be a situation wherein political parties that are key players will make their positions very clear, but when we saw the agenda, it was different from the stakeholders' meeting.

THE SPEAKER: How did you know he was chairing?

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, unlike your age in which you were dealing with typewriters, we are using sophisticated technology in our days *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, when the President was talking about the Anti-Corruption Commission, he made the statement as if the Anti-Corruption Bill has been amended. People who are speech writers in Sierra Leone should be very careful with the way they present issues, so that they will not deceive the President and put his reputation on the line *[Applause]*. I have always stood for that and I will always stand for the same position because the President is my friend. When they are talking about the Anti-Corruption Bill, they presented the idea as if it

has been amended. I want the public to know that the Bill in question is still in Parliament and it has not yet been amended.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the President mentioned the welfare of Members of Parliament, I am yet to see a situation in which parliamentarians are asking for houses. However, we appreciate the President for the houses he intends to build, but there is something more important than the houses. I refer you to Page 51, Paragraph 206 of this Speech. It states that Parliament is the heartbeat of democratic governance. I will pull the word 'heart' and say 'beat' of our democracy. This is because we were seriously beaten here. How can you beat your heartbeat? I know the critical roles of Parliament and Parliament is a noble place and a beacon of peace. The President says Parliament is 'a beacon of peace, progress, democracy and good governance.' S.O. [2], 'if na so e bi, wi go swei.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have critically studied the Free Quality Education in Sierra Leone and I am postulating another view that might sound very controversial in the ears of those who hold the view that the Free Quality Education is helping us. When I read the Speech of the President, he said that **90%** of the money accrued from the subsidy of fuel will address almost **90%** of the educational cost. Mr Speaker, when the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, introduced the Free Health Care Scheme, it was of no cost to the people of Sierra Leone.

The SPEAKER: I hope you are not in mid-flight because you only have a minute to go.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I know that was going to be my fate even before I started.

THE SPEAKER: I did say twenty minutes

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I know that was going to be my fate and I was prepared for it. If subsidies were removed from rice and fuel, where are we going? The Honourable Member from Kenema, Honourable Francis Kaisamba spoke about the school feeding programme and I asked myself the question, the man who read the Speech or the Minister of Education, who is deceiving this House? The Chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Education was here when the Minister of Education appeared before the Committee and told Members that nothing has been disbursed for the school feeding

programme. If you remove subsidy on rice, you will find out that a cup of rice that was sold at **Le800** will now be sold at **Le1, 500**. This means that **Le700** has been added to the original cost of a cup. If for instance, a family consumes ten cups of rice a day and multiply **Le700** by 30 days, you will get **Le210, 000**. This is higher than the cost of a primary school child. Mr Speaker, what we are experiencing in this country is not just hardship. If you are talking about inheriting a bad Economy, I think the person who could have said so was the late President, Dr Alhaji Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. He actually inherited a broken nation and not even the Economy, but because he was sober minded and focused, he concentrated on the things that united us. He did not focus on issues that could have divided us as a nation *[Applause]*. Mr Speaker, where are we going as a nation? I want to restate here that the Economy during the Ebola scourge was minus twenty-one [-21] from a positive of **20.8**. This is not my calculation, but it was a fact and before March, 2018, it was gradually moving towards **6.3**. When I read this document, the Minister of Finance said our GDP is now **3.2%**. If you took over from **6%** and now we are at **3.7%**, what is going on? They said the GDP has increased by **14%**, but it was **12.5%**. We were also subsidising for rice and fuel.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, less you accuse me of being unfair, but let me remind you that you started at exactly 2:25 p.m. and the time is now 2:47 p.m.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: On that note, I wish I was lucky like Honourable Francis A. Kaisamba, who spoke for forty five minutes.

THE SPEAKER: He was the proposer of the Motion, Honourable Member.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I know my time is up, but let me conclude by saying that we hope a person of your character and experience will guide not just this Parliament. We need to hear from you to make a stand that will benefit our children yet unborn because our nation is now a scattered nation. Thanks you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for a very enlightened and constructive contribution. I also thank you for the advice you have offered to Mr Speaker.

HON. SAHR JUANA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to introduce and present the national delivery programme and not a speech of the President. I am here not to praise him because of the good things he has done for this nation. I am sure the good

things he has done for this nation will live after him and the evil others did to this nation is now living with them *[Applause]*. I see this delivery as a testimony and evidence based. I do not see it as Speech naturally made by leaders just to cajole the people, but this is an affidavit of truth *[Applause]*. When the President speaks, it becomes a divine Speech *[Applause]*. Let me hastily cautioned Honourable Members that we are in the period of Ramadan and we should be careful not to go against the principles of the Islamic order. My colleagues on the other side, who for national circumstance, are used fabrication, they must be guided that Prophet Muhammad is watching *[Applause]*. Let us ensure we refrain from saying the wrong things. Let us keep to the sacrament and do justice to this nation. I hate to tell people who inherited the battered Economy because even those in the upper and lower galleries who walked long distances to come here, are here to see the evidence of disgrace that the former regime placed on this country for over twenty years *[Laughter]*. They walked on bare feet to come and witness the catastrophes you caused to this nation in your eleven years rule. For you to stand here and challenge this decision, it is an immoral injustice *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to however state here that some are doing things unwillingly. You have been influenced by external forces, but God will forgive you and may the evil spirit that made you to boycott Parliament crush their heads *[Applause]*. If you were here to listen to the genuine interpretation of the President's achievements, you would not have been here, struggling to tell lies. I am sorry if I am not referring to Members of Parliament, but by making issues out of the reality *[Laughter]*. We have never gone to war with firing; we must ensure we have taken positions. I am making my position very clear before I heat the nail on the head. The people of this country will hold you accountable for the injustices perpetuated. Today, I can talk from my own microphone, which was very impossible few months ago. I refused to speak because I feared for viral diseases using a single microphone *[Laughter]*. As we speak, our Parliament is as sophisticated and as equal to any Parliament in the world *[Applause]*. Bravo to this administration and the President for making this House a unique legislative organ. I think we should be proud of the fact that Honourable Members are now in paradise. Are you not proud now when in those days you were crowded and even onlookers will have nowhere to pass?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, we are all getting rather captivated by your pontificating, but let me remind you that you have spent five minutes in doing that. I want to also remind you about the S.O dealing with irrelevances, which is S.O. 32 [5].

HON. SAHR JUANA: Mr Speaker, I accept your observation. The President said: **“One year has gone soon, but with so much achievement made.”** That brings me to the issue of corruption. I am sure by establishing these Commissions of Inquiry and exposing corrupt officials who have stolen this country’s resources, it is enough evidence to this Government’s stance against corruption. I would like to inform the public that there are some unscrupulous men and women who loof this country. They have crippled the Economy of this country. They worked very hard to wreck this country. Today, Members of Parliament on the other side are saying, the S.O. [2] di grɔn dry. Bɔt una dɔn sɔk all di wata, una suk uman blood, nw una sai de gron dry’ *[Applause]*. The Commissions of Enquiry have started revealing certain mysteries and we have realised that Sierra Leone is not poor as we think. The problem is that we have wicked men who plundered this country’s meagre resources. They have left this country in poverty *[Laughter]*. I am a very decent Sierra Leonean *[Undertone]*. We have set up the Anti-Corruption Commission several years ago and this is the first time under the no nonsense and energetic young man, Sierra Leone has retrieved **Le12bln** from corrupt public officials *[Applause]*. This is a significant success for this nation. Why are you holding the truth and allowing your people to suffer?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, did you say **Le12bln**?

HON. SAHR JUANA: Yes, Mr Speaker. The sum of **Le 12bln** has been retrieved by the ACC from corrupt officials. I am sure that is just a small portion of what they have stolen *[Laughter]*. It is always good to have a commander that knows how to fight in the battlefield *[Applause]*. I am a friend of the APC, but when it comes to reality, let us be friends forever *[Laughter]*. Sometimes I pity some of you because you were not a party to most of the things that took place. Some of you were never part of a system that was characterised by barbarism. Today, you are there to steer the ship. When we talk about wicked and good people, it is not hard to distinguish between the two. I want to however thank the Honourable Member for being a good judge and may God bless you *[Applause]*.

I heard my colleague on the other side, a very young gentleman, who said that salaries are not forth coming.

THE SPEAKER: Do not misquote him. He said salaries are not forth coming on time.

HON. SAHR JUANA: Thank you, Mr Speaker for that grammatical correction, but that was my intention *[Laughter]*. We know in the past that salaries were not coming, but nobody cared because Members of Parliament were feeder roads contractors *[Applause]*. Today, Members of Parliament are no longer contractors and their salaries are the only means of survival. The President is saying that you should depend on your salaries, so that it will take care of your people.

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

HON. SAHR JUANA: I come from a district that makes history in election in this country. When it was their turn, election results and votes were nullified and the victory went to them and they celebrated... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have just been reminded by the Clerk. Can I please know the person who seconded the Motion just now for the records?

HON. SAHR JUANA: Today, they are in the wilderness and they will remain there forever *[Applause]*. I will now assure you with authority that for the first time in eleven years, the roads linking Pendembu and Koidu or Yenga that used to be a disputed border area is now been tarred. As we speak, organic vegetables, fruits, palm oil and other produce are being transported to Freetown within twenty four hours *[Applause]*. Few months ago, I spoke about the malnourished conditions of Members of Parliament, but for the past few months, you will agree with me that the faces of Members of Parliament are beginning to show fertility *[Applause]*. We are now bringing enough organic materials from Kailahun into the capital city.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the youth. It is a pleasure to hear distinguished Honourable Members deviating from the reality. The Honourable Member was accusing the current Minister of Youth. I am sure what he has said is unfounded and untrue. They said they had a youth farm that did not exist. Where were the youth? They cannibalised them and they were murdered in cold blood, otherwise we would have seen the youth in

the farm. We did not see the youth and the youth farm. We are going to investigate them for the number of youth they claimed to have employed *[Applause]*. It is most likely that those youth you claimed to have employed on those farms did not exist or they have been cannibalised. I think I would have to move a Motion *[Laughter]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know the literature I am presenting is a real literature and therefore it will go down in history. I am not making false allegations, but telling you exactly what Sierra Leoneans need. In this new administration, we must celebrate and that is why we should bring out the truth. Let me ask a rhetoric question and I do not need an answer. By exposing the world best criminals through the Commissions of Enquiry, is that not a way of solving our problem? It is indeed part of the solution.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, a colleague is on his legs.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 32 [6] and S.O. 32 [8]. In 32 [6], I want to remind the Honourable Member that the Commissions of Enquiry are on-going... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: They are Commissions of Inquiry and judicial tribunals.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: But do we have to pre-empt the judgement?

THE SPEAKER: No.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member referred to us as criminals? And you are saying it is just a Commission. It is not just a Commission, but a trial and investigations which are on-going.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have to listen. The S.O. you have cited talks about a judicious decision. Commissions of Enquiry are not a court. I want to remind the Honourable Member that using the word 'criminal' is quite offensive and unacceptable because nobody has been convicted. So, please withdraw that statement. Honourable Sahr Juana, let us use a language that is parliamentary. Again, nobody has been found guilty or convicted. The word 'criminal' implies somebody who has been tried and found guilty.

HON. SAHR JUANA: Noted, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you and please withdraw the word 'criminal.'

HON. SAHR JUANA: Mr Speaker, let the word 'criminal' be expunged.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, we have to be careful when we debate in this Parliament. I could remember vividly it was Honourable Lahai Marah during the debate of the Budget who stood up and said we were debating a 'criminal Budget.' So, what goes around comes around.

THE SPEAKER: I will not encourage anyone to use and get away with the word criminal because if you use it, I will ask you to substantiate it. A 'criminal' is somebody who has been found guilty of an offence by a court of law.

HON. SAHR JUANA: Mr Speaker, I hope I am fine and are you okay?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am always fine, but let us try to be civil and parliamentary.

HON. SAHR JUANA: You asked my colleague on the other side why he was so nervous and he said the content of the Speech made him so. Therefore, he referred to the Minister of Youth Affairs as a shame and that the action is a shame and nobody protested. Well, I rest my case and may the Lord Almighty deliver justice [*Applause*]. When I looked into the eyes of my colleagues on the other side, they are also my brothers. I pray that they will not take offence for an action committed by other persons who were stewards because you are innocent. My allegations and accusations are not directly pointing at you because I know you are innocent. You were not part of it and please do not be part of it.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, there is a very important part of the Constitution. I wish to draw your attention to it. There is a fundamental principle that is embodied in the Constitution that everybody is presumed innocent until found guilty. Nobody has been found guilty yet and that is why I want to urge you to avoid using incendiary language like 'criminal.' It is most un-parliamentary.

HON. SAHR JUANA: Thank you very much, my Speaker. I feel the atmosphere is becoming tense with my revelations or with my frantic efforts to bring out the necessary facts. I think nature is becoming offended, but for the fact that nature is on my side, I stand protected by God Almighty to speak the truth in the open. If the erstwhile Member

of Parliament, who has just been nominated to serve as Minister of Mineral Resources were here, he would have attested to the fact that the engines of ambulances meant to save lives were found in private homes. This man was in charge of Government reforms programme. However, I am not here to indict them, but to let the public, who are the suffering masses or the tax payers, realise that their moneys were stolen. The President said he inherited a battered Economy and we all know that he inherited a bartered Economy. That is why the seats we now occupy were death traps, had it not been for the robust transformation which has made it possible for us to sit on comfortable swivel chair Honourable Member *[Applause]*.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I earlier called this Speech an affidavit and not a Speech. You know what an affidavit means. It is an evidence of sustainable truth *[Applause]*. Therefore, on my behalf and on behalf of my colleagues, I endorse and support this document. Thank you and God bless you *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for the constructive and excellent contribution he has made to the debate.

HON. FODAY L. KABBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I followed the debate very carefully and I asked myself several questions. The first question is, are we actually serious about debating the President's Address he spent four hours presenting in this Well? Secondly, was the President actually thinking of having such a Speech to be treated in this manner? When Honourable Sahr Juana was talking about the conditions of Parliament, I was in agreement with him *[Applause]*. I want to thank the President and his Government for implementing a project that was initiated by his predecessor *[Applause]*. Unfortunately, I am magnanimous enough to thank the Honourable Member, but he has been very selfish in his Speech and that was why he could not recognise what his predecessor did *[Applause]*. Honestly, you talk about implementing the project, but did forget about the initiator and for us to have a decent Parliament today, it was the initiative of the past Government and I want to say kudos to them *[Applause]*. Apart from that, he also mentioned Corruption and I agree that no government will progress if there is corruption in that country. However, I sympathise with the late President, Dr Alhaji Ahmed

Tejan Kabba more than the present government because he came at a time when over **\$18mIn** was embezzled in this country *[Applause]*. Besides, there was a treaty signed that those who embezzled that money should never be tried *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my senior colleague from Kenema spoke about development being equitably distributed. I came from Kabala and I am proud to say we are enjoying one of the best road networks in Sierra Leone. I want to thank the past Government for that *[Applause]*. I quite agree that development is about equitable distribution and for God's sake, Bo and Kenema have been enjoying electricity for so many years while Koinadugu and Kabala were in darkness. We never complained because we knew that development is a process. If we did not have electricity but we had roads, we appreciated at that time. I will not spend my time again responding to my colleagues because I want to assure you that the President will find more friends on this side than on that other side because we are adding value to his Address. My colleagues on the other side are only criticising the efforts of the former President. However, I want to remind them that the President knows he is not perfect. He is therefore going to address the gaps and that is exactly what we on the Opposition Bench are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer you to Paragraphs 12 and 13 of the Speech, where the President spoke about timber. I want to inform my colleagues that this is a serious issue and we need to treat it with seriousness. I came from Koinadugu District that is well known for its unique climate in this country during the months of November, December and January. We usually experience cold in the harmattan season, but that was then. That facility is no more because of deforestation. In one of his Executive Orders, he lifted the ban on timber, with the intention to export **13,000** timber, in which according to him, it was already available at the time and that was what we are expecting. Mr Speaker, if you go to the provinces, especially in Koinadugu, you will notice that our bushes are being misused by foreigners at the expense of our poor people *[Applause]*. The dangers are many and we cannot access our feeder roads that lead to the villages because they are being destroyed. It is unfortunate that Government is proud of raising so much money from timber, but timber trading is destroying not only the present generation, but also the future of this nation. If something is not done, we will be held responsible in future because we have the time to say the truth, but we did not.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that because timber logging is done in secret, it is happening everywhere. We are aware about it and it is not a matter of the police giving a report on that. It is happening in our constituencies and we see it every now and then, but we decided to keep quiet. Global warming is taking place and our girls are dropping out of school because they are attracted to foreigners who go to our communities for timber. Girls are dropping out of school and teenage pregnancy is on the increase. What are we doing as a Parliament? The youth are saying that Members of Parliament are alright because we are employed. In his Address, the President did not say much to address timber logging.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education. When my colleague from Kenema was speaking, he referred to Paragraphs 76, 77 and 78. Well, we want to applaud the Government for its flagship programme on Education. Education is one of the ingredients of making a nation prosperous. I am just from my constituency, where I spoke to a good number of teachers. This is why I said earlier that the President has more friends on this side because you are deceiving him. You do not want to tell him the truth and we must speak the truth if we want this country to move forward. Mr Speaker, those who are supposed to benefit from this project are still suffering, especially those in the community schools. Some of us living in big towns and cities can afford to pay the fees. It was meant for children whose parents could not afford to pay fees. The community schools are not benefiting from the Free Quality Education. I am talking from an informed point of view. Please do not tell me what to do because I know exactly what I am doing *[Applause]*. Unfortunately, when you had time to speak, all you did was showering praises. You did not bring out the issues. Therefore, please allow me to bring out the issues in order to educate you. We need to do a lot when it comes to education, so that we can achieve this project. Let me say it for the records because my colleague from Kenema also stated that the school feeding programme is on-going in places like Bombali, Koinadugu, etc. I want to categorically deny that nothing like school feeding is taking place in Koinadugu District.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 32[13]. I have been told that my colleague has made a lot of references to my contribution. My contribution on the Free Quality Education was all about the flagship project of the

President and it has been launched. I also said that not every aspect of it is perfect. I am aware of the challenges and they will be corrected as we go along. However, I want to remind my friend that this is a laudable venture and it is very ambitious. I want to reaffirm here that the school feeding project has been launched and some districts have started the implementation process. Mr Speaker, this was what I said. I also said probably certain parts of Koinadugu District had started benefiting. I did not mention his Constituency and probably his constituency has not started benefitting from it. I am sure the school feeding project is on-going, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I hope with that clarification the Honourable Member will take note.

HON. FODAY L. KABBA: Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Well, if you go to Paragraph 76 of this Speech, the President said: **"Additionally, 210,000 pupils in Koinadugu, Falaba, Kambia, Pujehun and Tonkolili are currently benefiting from the National School Feeding Programme."** Mr Speaker, we should know that politics determines who has the power and not who has the truth and that is exactly what is manifesting in this Well. I am saying this because if we are speaking truth to power, I am sure we are here to ensure that we identify the gaps and bring them to the Table, so that we can find possible solutions. We should not also forget that in politics, we have sunny and rainy days. As politicians, our aim is not only to win elections, but how we can also collectively contribute to positive change in society. On that note, Mr Speaker, I rest my case *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sure I gave no indication of a desire to stop you, but if you are tired I can understand.

HON. FODAY L. KABBA: Mr Speaker, I am satisfied.

THE SPEAKER: Well, you still have five minutes, but I am sure you are okay.

HON. FODAY L. KABBA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, but I prepared myself for fifteen minutes.

THE SPEAKER: You are very considerate. On that note, I thank the Honourable Member for his wonderful contribution. I have exhausted my list of six speakers and we should prepare for another six speakers tomorrow.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for your information, please tomorrow will be the second allotted day for the Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President and Wednesday, 29th May, 2019 will be the third and final allotted day for the Presidential Speech. On Thursday, the Committee on Appointments and the Public will present its report here for debate. We shall also discuss the Bill on the Borrowers and Lenders Acts, 2019. The Bank of Sierra Leone Act, 2019 and the Banking Act, 2019 will be considered on Friday, 31st May, 2019.

THE SPEAKER: I want to commend the Leader of Government Business. I think we have not been getting this kind of foreknowledge of the work programmes of Parliament. I want to commend you for this innovation. You have given foreknowledge to parliamentarians about the work programme ahead of them. I am sure the Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella will applaud you. I am also sure that the Acting Leader of the Opposition will equally applaud you.

Honourable Members, I want to remind you that I have not yet reviewed the sitting positions. I am still leaving that issue hanging, but it will be addressed at an appropriate time.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 23. We have found ourselves doing a very delicate job for this country. We come and oppose Bills that are people's personal interest, we usually opposed those who come for approval based on the fact that they are either not capable or unqualified for those positions and those who are opposed will not be happy with Members of Parliament. Recently, one of us was attacked at night by gunmen. The gunmen shoot inside his room and in fact what interested him most is that when they entered, some of them wanted to take away some items and the leader of the delegation told them that we have not come to steal, but to kill him. The Honourable Member had to maneuver and they did not see him. That was how they left disappointed. As recent as yesterday, another Member of Parliament from Makeni was also attacked. His vehicle was going to the village and the attackers thought he was inside the vehicle. They went with machetes and other weapons to kill him at Makeni. It could be you or any one of us.

THE SPEAKER: This is a very serious issue.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Indeed, Mr Speaker, it is a very serious situation.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, do not forget that what the Honourable Member is informing this House could happen to any of you tomorrow. This is a very serious thing. Today it is the Honourable Members he has mentioned and tomorrow it could be you.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to substantiate what I have said, the guys that attacked the Honourable Members were arrested and they are currently at the police station.

THE SPEAKER: Thank God for that.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, some of us will not feel secured, but we are here to discuss issues and I have not politicised the attack. It could be any Member of Parliament, not excluding SLPP Members of Parliament. I am saying this because we are doing a delicate job for this country. We are doing a job that ministers and other people are not doing. So, if there is any possibility of attack, it is Honourable Members who oppose Bills, Agreement and presidential nominees. The people we oppose here may not be happy with some of us. I want to plead for security to be provided for Members of Parliament
[Applause].

THE SPEAKER: I want to thank the Honourable Member for this information. I think we cannot treat this lightly. I will suggest to the Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition to address a letter to me on this very crucial issue and I would like to discuss with him and the Leader of Government Business to know the next step we can take.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I think I have once told you to provide security system to protect Members of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: I will suggest you do not prejudge the issue. That is why I have decided for us to meet.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I will go by your instructions.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 3:45 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 28th May, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.]