

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

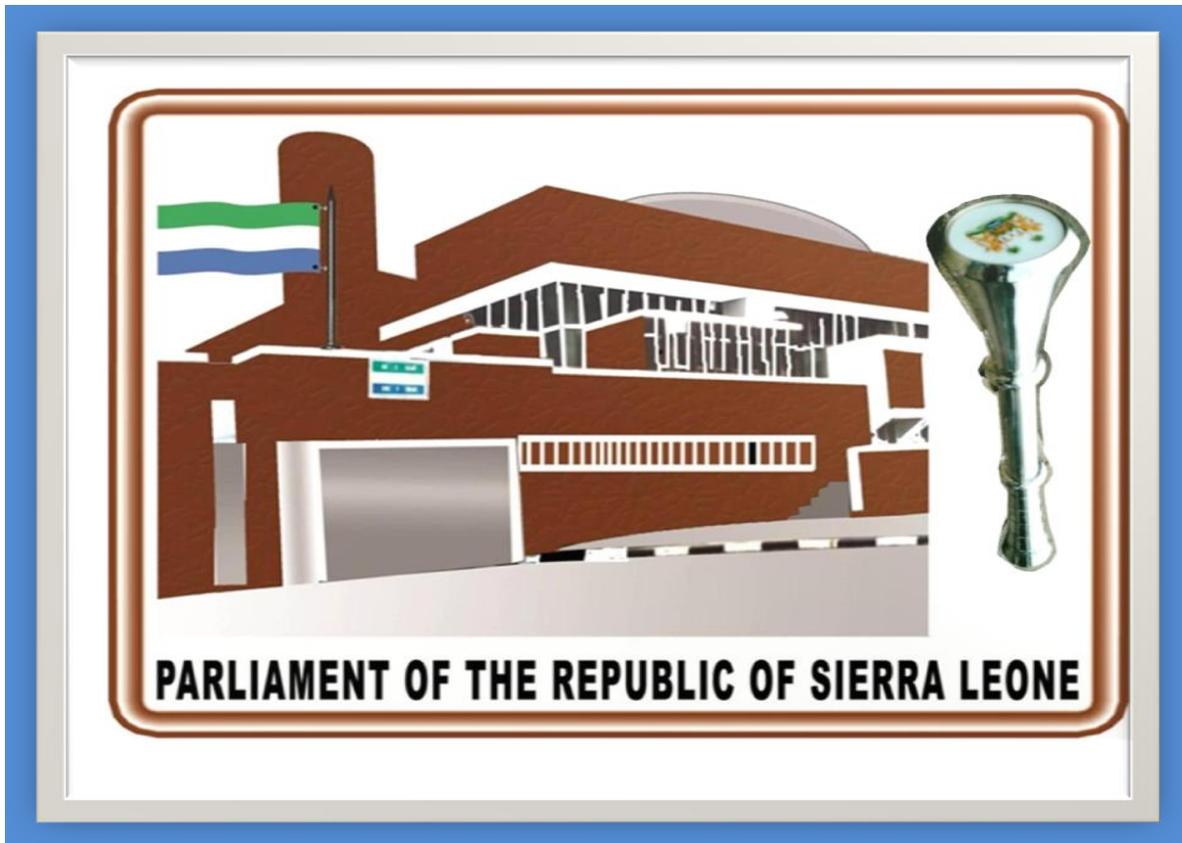
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION - FIRST MEETING

MONDAY, 28TH MAY, 2018

SESSION – 2018/2019



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Monday, 28th May, 2018.

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BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 10TH MAY, 2018"



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Monday, 28th May, 2018.

I. PRAYERS

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

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

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON THURSDAY, 24TH MAY, 2018

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings of the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 24th May, 2018. Before that, Honourable Members, today's business is the commencement of debate on the Presidential Address. In that regard, I would like to advise that if there is mistake in your names, but you have made correction during the last sitting, there is no need for you to go over the same correction again because the Clerks-at-the-Table would have endeavoured to take care of that since the last sitting. We go page by page. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9. If there are no corrections or amendments, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Thursday, 24th May, 2018.

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I second the Motion, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To].

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 24th May, 2018 has been adopted]

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

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

THAT WE THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HERE ASSEMBLED WISH TO THANK HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT FOR THE ADDRESS HE SO GRACIOUSLY DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE STATE OPENING OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTH

PARLIAMENT OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE IN THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THURSDAY, 10TH MAY, 2018”

[FIRST ALLOTTED DAY]

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved ‘that we the Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 10th May, 2018”

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

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

[Question Proposed]

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to commence the debate on the Presidential Address delivered by His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio on Thursday, 10th May, 2018. It is a tradition that every year, before the commencement of a parliamentary session, the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone should come to Parliament and address the people’s representatives and the country with regards to the affairs of the state. On that particular occasion on Thursday, 10th May, 2017 His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio came to Parliament and performed that particular function. This is an occasion where the President is expected to tell this nation about the present situation in the country, the things he has done, those he intends to do and the methods or procedures he will use to achieve them. But on that occasion, the country just returned from an election and we had a new President. Basically, what he presented to this House was the state of affairs of this nation for the past ten years. For instance, he spoke what he inherited and how he intended to mitigate some of the problems affecting the growth of this nation. He also spoke about how he would carry out his own programmes in the next five years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President talked about many issues; i.e., the Economy, Education, Health, Sanitation, Agriculture, etc. In this Address, His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, spoke about the Economy of Sierra Leone. The President painted a very bad picture of the Economy he inherited from the former regime. In no uncertain terms, he had said he inherited the worst Economy in the history of this country since independence. That is clearly stated in the Speech he delivered in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President also spoke about our expenditure pattern. He stated that our expenditure always outweigh the revenue generated. He said that Sierra Leone has degenerated into a situation wherein the government cannot even pay its workers without relying on the Central Bank for overdraft services. In salvaging that situation, the President ordered the implementation of the Single Treasury Account, so that all moneys from all MDAs would be remitted into that particular Account. The President equally put a moratorium on the export of Timber and even banned all tax waivers. He said that tax holidays are over. The outcome of those actions by the President boosted the Economy of this country; and within one month, this country was able to raise enough money and used part of it to pay salaries without reverting to central bank for overdraft services. Again, the President spoke about the status of our debt management obligation. He said that the debt he inherited from the past government is so huge that it would be unsustainable to pay those debts. The President also said that our exchange rate is so bad that it would be very difficult to put that under control. He however spoke about the measures he would put in place in order to stabilise the exchange rate. He said we should embark on agriculture and cash crop production, so that we may earn foreign exchange.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about putting in place monitoring policies, which are lacking in this country. We do not monitor our Economy and that is why there are lots of issues to be addressed. The President talked about our mineral resources. This country has depended on mineral resources for the past twenty to thirty years and that is why we have not been able to manage our Economy

efficiently and effectively. This is why when we had the twin shock, it was very difficult for this nation. So, the President promised to diversify the Economy through Agriculture, Tourism and Marine Resources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President talked about Education. The President knew that our educational system has been in shamble for the past ten years. The former government was busy hunting ghost teachers for ten years. I was even tempted to ask for the report on 'ghost teachers' they have been hunting for ten years. They never wrote any report. We have trained and qualified teachers who have taught for several years without being recruited by the Ministry. Therefore, the educational system in this country had been in a very bad shape. If you look at the buildings of our universities; i.e., the University of Sierra Leone, Njala University, etc., they are very old and dilapidated. The past government could not even rehabilitate them. So, the President, in his wisdom, decided to divide the Ministry of Education into Primary and Secondary Education, and Tertiary and Technical Education. We now have two Ministers in the Ministry of Education. The Minister of Primary and Secondary will basically focus on that aspect, whilst the Minister of Technical and Tertiary Education will focus on higher and technical institutions of learning.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President made a promise to the people of this country that he would provide free education. When he was delivering his Speech in this House, he stated it clearly that free education will commence in September, 2018. That is a laudable venture and a serious ambition. Some people thought that particular ambition would never come to pass, but thank God the President has given a time line on that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about the teachers in his Speech. Teachers are very important people in any society. If we are here today as educated people, it is because we had people who taught us in schools. We are here because we are educated. The President has made promises to the teachers. He said that any teacher, who has been teaching for ten years and above, would have three of his or her children going to university for free. In other words, scholarships will be

awarded to children of teachers who have served for ten years and above. I think that is a laudable venture and it is only a serious government that can make such proposals and attempt to actualise them. Furthermore, the President equally spoke about adults Literacy. He said that there are lots of adults in this country who could not read and write. Therefore, the President wants to put emphasis on numeracy and adult education. He has promised in this document to create institutions wherein tutorials are provided to adults, so that they can be able to read and write. The President believes that if this gesture is provided to adults, they will have the opportunity to align themselves with what is happening in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has taken the issue of education very important. When we were in the University, we used to get Grant-in-Aid scholarship, but for the past 10 years, it was very difficult to hear about Grants-in-aid services. Basically, Grants-in-Aid scholarships were awarded to few people. People used to get Grants-in-Aid from their districts. For the past ten years, only the selected few were awarded Grants-in-Aid. The President has said that under the 'New Direction' agenda, he would make sure that Grants-in-aid are accessible by those who are qualified. Again, we have many students in this country; and he has stated that other students who would not be lucky to access Grants-in-Aid would have the opportunity to access funds in the form of loan. This shows that we believe in education and we want to develop and promote this country through education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke a lot on health and painted a gloomy picture of the health situation in this country. According to the Speech, Sierra Leone is still one of the countries with the highest infant and maternal mortality. In fact, with all the reforms that were undertaken when the Ebola struck this nation, the health sector is one of the sectors that is still epileptic. For example, we had a number of ambulances that were donated to this country, but those ambulances could not be accounted for any longer. So, the President is saying that we need to have a Commission of enquiry that should look into all donations made to Sierra Leone during

the Ebola era. This is very important because we want to know how those donations were utilised.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President said that the Free Health Care programme was a very good idea, but it was not working properly as intended. Even the distribution of medical drugs and equipment has been problematic. Cases of vehicles being impounded for drugs trafficking were also reported. What did the President say about this anomaly? He said he would try to close all those leakages and overhaul the entire system, so that the free health care drugs could reach their destination. The President, in his wisdom, has noted that many ordinary Sierra Leoneans and government usually spend huge sums of moneys on sending patients abroad for diagnosis and treatment. He said that he would equip the districts and regional hospitals in this country with modern equipment, so that we can save the required foreign exchange. It is high time our people are treated in Sierra Leone, instead of sending them on medical grounds to places like Ghana. As far as I am concerned, I think this is a laudable venture. I have heard a lot of undertones from my colleagues on the other side, but this Speech cannot be criticised because this document has just been delivered and we are trying to implement the issues raised in it. So, there is nothing you can say about them at this moment. If you want to be sincere with yourself, it could be after one session or one or two years. For now, we cannot be distracted and we have to make sure that we implement this document to the latter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President also promised to put in place a lot of measures, so that the health system in this country is compared to other advanced countries. We want to make sure that our health system becomes the envy of our neighbours.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about roads. I want to state here that Sierra Leone is one of the countries where we pay more than other countries for road construction and infrastructure. For the past ten years, the 'Agenda for Change' and 'Agenda of Prosperity' were focused on road infrastructure. All past ministers were

ministers of roads. I am saying this because when you ask the Minister of Health and Sanitation, he will say S.O. [2] 'you no see road? The Minister of Agriculture was also talking about roads. It is accepted that some strides were made by the last government, but at what cost? The President talked about the high cost of those roads, which is very sad and discouraging. He promised to dialogue with key stakeholders like the Ministry of Works and Infrastructure, Sierra Leone Roads Authority [SLRA] and the Road Maintenance Fund Administration [RMFA]. The failure of the SLRA was due to the interference of the Ministry of Works, particularly the Minister and the Director General of the RMFA. The question is, what will the 'New Direction' do differently? We will audit all contracts awarded in order to ascertain whether they have been properly executed. In other words, we will find out if the agreements they have signed are on track or not. If they are on track, definitely they will not be terminated at all; but if they are not on course, we have to reassess those contracts before we take final decision.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues on the other side will attest to this fact that I have been talking about the roads in Kenema District in the last Parliament. I come from Kenema District and I have been calling on the then Government to ensure that the roads in Kenema District are tarred. That did not happen and Kenema was marginalised completely. I maintain the service delivery index should be equal. If you give Makeni one kilometre road, you should give Kenema one kilometre road. The distribution of goods and services to the different parts was unequal and imbalance. If you conduct a statistical analysis on the distribution of roads in this country, you will realise that a lot of roads were paved and rehabilitated in Makeni, Magburaka and Port Loko. A very important and viable district headquarters town like Kenema was ignored and marginalised. I used to tell them Kenema was left out and in my own judgement the only reason why Kenema was marginalised was because Kenema is the stronghold of the Sierra Leone People's Party [SLPP]. But thank God the SLPP is in authority today and we have assured the people of Kenema District that under the 'New Direction' the roads in Kenema District will be rehabilitated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the only road that was contracted to a company called First Icon is the Blama/Hanga Road, which is 6.5 kilometre. It was a one year contract, but they have been on that road for the past three years. They did not pay the contractors. I was a member of the Committee on Works and we even summoned that company severally and they told us that they have not been paid. So, the point I want to make is that discriminations we have experienced are not good for our democracy and our unity. This is Sierra Leone and Kenema contributes hugely to the GDP of this country. The people of Kenema District should benefit as well. So, I do not need to remind the SLPP led-Government about Kenema District. Of course, Kenema is part of this country; and therefore, Kenema should benefit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Energy. His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio painted a picture in this document that when the APC came to power in 2007, they brought an emergency power supply under a company known as Income Electrics and a huge amount of money was poured into that contract. Again, we have approved a lot of Agreements on Energy in the last Parliament; and those Agreements worth millions of dollars. So, for the past ten years, we have not been able to achieve reliable and sustainable Energy. I want to inform all of us that no country will develop without reliable and sustainable Energy. So, when the APC lost power, we are now experiencing intermittent power supply. Mr Speaker, this used to happen, but we should ask ourselves why so soon. If the electricity was reliable and sustainable, the electricity problem we are still facing supposed to be a thing of the past. But what we are experiencing now in the Energy sector has demonstrated to us the unreliable nature of the emergency power supply.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is no way this country can continue to pay huge amount of money for electricity that is not reliable. This government is doing something differently. We do not want electricity at all cost, but electricity that is reliable and sustainable. So, what we are working on, under the 'New Direction' agenda as provided for in this document, is to make sure that we improve on the power supply in Freetown and its environs. The Minister is working on that assiduously to provide

electricity to all the different headquarter towns in this country. The President also promised to look for other means of power supply like solar energy, biomass etc. to improve on Energy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President talked about Local Councils. The Local Councils were reintroduced in 2004, under the previous government of His Excellency late Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba. They were defunct for over 24 years or more, but we believe that Local Councils are very important because they are responsible for socio-economic and political growth in our various communities. Therefore, we want them to be part of our governance process. In the previous regime, Local Councils were removed from our governance structure on the basis of a report presented to the decision makers. We believe Local Councils should be strengthened. We are aware of the numerous problems inherent in the operations of Local Councils, but they should not be terminated because of that. We have to look at the challenges encountered by Local Councils for the past ten years and conduct an assessment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this Honourable House that the Local Councils were reintroduced to provide services to the people at local level. The question is, have we achieved these aims and objectives? I was once a member of the Committee on Local Government and Rural Development. We visited those Councils severally. Sometimes we invited them to come to Parliament for questioning. I have not seen much development and growth in the various localities where these Local Councils operated. And at some point, they alleged that they have not been given development grants by the then government, stating that they were basically given administrative grants. You cannot just provide administrative grants for institutions that are meant to provide developments. The officials of those institutions are not there to sustain themselves, but to embark on developing the local communities. So, we have to look at the local government system again and strengthen it for the purpose of service delivery.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are committed to devolving political, financial and other functions to the Local Councils. The past government failed, to a very large

extent, to devolve some functions to Local Councils. A very few functions were devolved, while other functions are still with the central government. They need to be devolved as a way of encouraging and strengthening them. The President spoke about paving the township roads to be devolved to Local Councils because they know their townships. They know their roads and they can work on them better than Road Maintenance Fund, that sits in Freetown, I don't know if the Director General is still there, he was very selective and partisan with regards the road they were doing. So, we are looking at holistic development for the entire country. When the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba was in power, we did our development across the country. So, local government is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about how he should bring the Paramount Chiefs together with the Local Councils. We want these Local Councils to be strengthened, so that they can bring development and achievement to our localities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about water resources. Water as a resource is critical for the health and development of every nation. However, water is in short supply in the country. For example, in Freetown and its environs, we see people carrying five gallons every day to look for water. They used to cut water pipes all over the city in search of water. This is because the population has grown and the dam can no longer cater for the current population. So, the President promised to introduce the Integrated Water Resource Management, so that we can address the water problem in Freetown. The President has also said that we would protect the water sheds, so that we would get the required water reserves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Presidential Address is a one year plan of His Excellency the President and I want to implore our colleagues on the other side to look at this document. The Leader of the Opposition has said, in one of his contributions when we were approving presidential nominees, that they did not have much to say about the nominees because they have not seen their performances yet. In this Speech, therefore, the Speech of His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was a maiden Speech he delivered to this Parliament. I will encourage Members of the opposition,

particularly the APC to look at this document critically because there are lots of goodies for Sierra Leoneans. As patriotic Sierra Leoneans, we should appreciate this document and work towards its implementation. It will be too early for any criticism

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to wish all of us a fruitful deliberation and I wish all of us well. Thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: *[Leader of the Opposition-APC]* Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker this is just a concern. I want to call the attention of the Clerks-at-the-Table to make sure they keep proper records of Ministers and Permanent Secretaries who are attending this debate. This is something we have been talking about all these years and we have been keeping records of them. So, I hope you are keeping the MDAs attendance register. The Leader of Government Business and I will look at the attendance at the end of this sitting. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the first speaker has opened the debate. For the new Members of Parliament, I wish to draw your attention specifically to certain provisions of the Standing Orders you may or may not have read. If you have not, I want to implore you to do so before you take the Floor. You should look at S.O. [32] to [43]. These references will basically inform and direct the course of the debate the House is engaged in and I want to ask Members to endeavour to keep their contributions within these provisions. Thank you.

Honourable Members, I have received lists of Honourable Members from the various Leaders who have expressed interest to take the Floor on this particular day's debates. If you know yourselves, please confine your contribution and make yourselves known when you catch my eye. I hope your name is on the list provided by your party.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make it essentially clear here that we the APC Members of Parliament are committed to promoting the ideals of this country because we are quite sure of the fact that after the five year term of the SLPP, we will come back to governance. We will not, in anyway, want to inherit a broken country. We will do

everything within the limit of our power to ensure that this country develops. So, I want to allay the fears of our colleagues in the 'New Direction' that we are committed to partnering with you, so that you can achieve your aims and objectives if they are in the best interest of this country. We are going to work with you because we know that after five years, we will come back to power *[Applause from the APC Bench]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for delivering this Speech here. It was very extensive and we want to extend our profound thanks to him. But after a thorough perusal of this Speech, there are lots of areas we took note of. Some of those areas were meant to demoralise the former government and the erstwhile President, whilst others were geared towards bringing down the hard earned reputation of the former government. I have always said, if I am to speak in the words of desiderata, I would say the sky is so broad that you do not need to bring another man's star down for your star to shine. You need to work on your own star.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me hastily draw your attention to certain statements made in the address of the President. I want to formally formalise and verbally verbalise what I think are the grey areas of the statement. In that regard, I will draw your attention to Paragraph 2, Page 1 of the Presidential Address. It says: **"I am here this morning to translate my campaign promises as articulated in the 'New Direction' Peoples Manifesto into policy action, the underlining principle of New Direction are discipline leadership, integrity, efficiency, professionalism and delivery. I am making this address against the backdrop of the worst economic situation that this country has faced since independence and characterised by a double digit inflation, low domestic revenue, high domestic debt burden, unsustainable external debts."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say something on the last part of this statement; i.e., 'unsustainable external debts.' First, I want to state here that it is only the IMF that has the legitimate right to analyse our debt sustainability because they conduct periodic debt sustainability analysis.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, can you justify that statement that 'it is only the IMF that is entitled to conduct debt sustainability analysis?'

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: With your permission, Mr Speaker, I will substantiate my statement before I conclude my contribution. I am not only talking for profile reason purposes, but because I have my facts and I will soon dish them to this House *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for you to say the debt of your country is unsustainable, IMF must have produced you with the prerequisite document that should substantiate your statement. I want to refer you to a publication by IMF on the 18th May, 2017. I would have loved to read the entire statement by IMF, but because of fear that S.O. 38 will be invoked against me, I will read the first sentence only. This statement was published by IMF on the 18th May, 2017 and it was on debt sustainability analysis. It says: "**Sierra Leone remains at a moderate risk of debt distress.**" If the IMF, which has all the apparatus they need to analyse our country's debt sustainability, has unhesitatingly and hastily vindicated this country, I want to believe we do not have a local institution in this country that publishes a report which is at variance with that of the IMF. Therefore, I want to advise that when the President is making a statement, he should not only listen to those putting pen on papers on his behalf. The President should make sure that he crosschecks with the legitimate bodies concerned.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I mentioned the IMF, my colleagues on the other side wanted to castigate me. But again, let me draw your attention to another financial institution in West Africa that has the legitimacy to analyse our Economy. It is called the West Africa Monetary Zone [WAMZ]. One of its primary responsibilities is to ensure that they analyse our Economy; i.e., the economies of West African countries, not excluding Sierra Leone. They are also charged with the responsibility of analysing our debts. The West African Monetary Zone states that 'a country's debts could only be defined as unsustainable when the debts of that country constitute **65%** of your country's GDP. For the unbelieving, Thomas' please go and find out. Therefore, I want

to put it to you unhesitatingly and with alacrity that our external debts are not even **60%** of our country's GDP. So, they have no legal standing to have said our debts are unsustainable.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, for the information of the House and for your own good, you may want to conceal to the undertone of quoting exactly the year of publication of the paper you are referencing.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want my colleagues to know that this is an Honourable House and nobody should have the tendency to source information without making their own effort. I want them to deliberately make use of the Research Department that has been provided by this Honourable House. Go to the Research Department and you will agree with me that my statement is correct.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, in the interest of S.O. [36][1] I would again ask you to be more specific in stating the reference document to which you are relying on.

HON. ABDUL KARBO: Mr Speaker, let me read [36][1] for you. It says: "**Debate upon any Motion, Bill, Amendment, shall be relevant to such Motion, Bill or Amendment except in the case of substantive Motion for the adjournment of Parliament.**" Mr Speaker, I see nothing in this [S.O.] that mandates me to be more specific here.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you quoted a document more than once and I am sure you are relying on it because you think it is relevant to the debate before this House.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Of course it is, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: This is why you should be more specific in making your reference.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I want this to be essentially known that the WAMZ has a lot of reports that they have published. Let them go and find out. I will refuse to be distracted.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, in the interest of this debate, I do not want to rule you out of order. Therefore, I want to respectfully ask that having done your wonderful research and referred the House to a particular document, we want you to be clear with your reference. We want to know the date of publication of that document.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O. [34]. Mr Speaker, if the direction is coming from you for him to refer to the specific document that is something which could be dealt with, but for him to respond to undertones based on what you predicated, I would kindly request that you reconsider your position.

THE SPEAKER: I simply want to facilitate the debate.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, you will agree with me that most of the debts the former Government is being castigated for were used widely for the development of this country. I want to refer my colleagues to the Matotoka/Sefadu Road, which my colleagues from the Coalition for Change [C4C] are using to access this Parliament in a blink of an eye. I want to refer my colleagues again to the Kenema/Pendembu Road, which they are now using to access Parliament. I want to refer you to Paragraph 2.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O. [35][5]. Members on the other side are interrupting the Honourable Member.

THE SPEAKER: I am afraid it relates to you too because the Honourable Member was on the Floor when you interrupted him rather unseemly.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was also shocked upon reading the President's Address when he said that this is the worst Economy since Independence. Mr Speaker, worst economies are not hastily determined. I was expecting a reference to have been made as to what parameter they used to determine that we have the worst economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform you that our Economy suffered a very serious shock, not only now but the first shock was in 1992 when we had the civil

war. At that time, our GDP contracted to **-19%**, which we considered as unprecedented. It had to take our country and the nation eight years for its revival from **-19%** to **6.65%** in the year 2000. So, for eight years, we were struggling with our Economy. I want it to be known here that the worst challenge our Economy has ever faced since Independence is in 2015, when we had the Ebola scourge, coupled with the decline in the price of iron ore. I want to remind this House that because we had a responsible Government, a people's centred Government, a Government that knew what the people needed and very willing to cater for their needs, the Government was able to revive our GDP to **6.3%** in 2016. What was achieved in eight years under the SLPP led-Government was achieved in just one year under the APC led-Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. So, I am of firm conviction that instead of castigating the former Government, the statement here should have highly commended the former government for being proactive in making sure that they work towards addressing these problems.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I am saying is in the President's Address that we had the worst Economy since independence. However, under the worst economic situation as described by the President, the former Government was able to pay monthly salaries of workers on time; under the worst Economy, as purported by my colleagues, there was an increase in the minimum wage from **Le 21,000** to **Le 500,000**; under the worst Economy, as purported by my colleagues, there was Free Health Care for children under five, pregnant women and lactating mothers; under the worst Economy, as purported by my colleagues, the town where I come from [Lungi] for the past twenty years, the former Government was able to provide electricity for Lungi [a place that was known for perpetual darkness]; under the worst Economy, as purported by my colleagues, Kono district was provided with electricity after thirty years of darkness; under the worst Economy, as stated by my colleagues, Makeni got electricity after thirty years of abysmal darkness; under the worst Economy, Port Loko was able to get electricity after twenty years of abysmal darkness; under the worst Economy, as stated by my colleagues, we were able to increase investment from five

hundred million to four billion Leones by the former Government; under the worst Economy, as purported by my colleagues, the former Government was able to pay the National Primary School Examination [NPSE], Basic Education Certificate Examination [BECE] and the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination [WASSCE] for every pupil; under the worst Economy as stated by my colleagues here **70%** of school fees for students in tertiary institutions were paid for by the former Government. Under the worst economy as stated by my colleagues all female students offering sciences in the university benefitted **100%** scholarship; under the worst Economy, as stated by my colleagues, we were referred to as the fastest growing Economy by World Bank and IMF in 2014.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to hastily draw your attention to Paragraph 35 of the Presidential Address. It says: **“Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am pleased to inform you that there has been an unprecedented scourge in the domestic revenue mobilisation resulting from these measures for the period 11th April to date, a total amount exceeding three hundred billion has been collected.”** Implementing the Single Treasury Account [STA] is not something that was automatic because there are processes and procedures to be followed. In the first place, you have to put in place legislation that supports the establishment of the TSA. Let me seize this opportunity, with my background knowledge in IT, to inform my colleagues the processes that were involved. Before you start implementing the TSA, there has to be a survey plan that explains the number of Government held bank accounts in the country. That survey was sponsored and facilitated by the erstwhile President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. Apart from the survey, there has to be the purchase of hardware and software packages that will create the nexus among all Government held bank accounts and the Accountant General’s Office. All of these processes were facilitated by the erstwhile Government of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Members who were in this House before this time will not succumb to what I am saying irrespective of party loyalty, but those who are genuine and patriotic [regardless of their political party affiliation], will

agree with me that the Bill was brought to this House under the Cash Management Unit to enact the 2016 Public Financial Management [PFM] Act. It is one of the Acts that gives the right for the creation of the TSA. To demonstrate how resilient, committed and relentless the previous Government was in ensuring the creation of the TSA, the Fiscal Management and Control Act of 2017 was enacted by this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, S.O. [2] `dis e feba lek wae Ronaldo don ol de ball en card de attacker, midfielder, defender, goalkeeper en later see Marcelo e cam take de ball nar Ronaldo e hand e kick en score en take de praise say nar e score without alluding to what Ronaldo did.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that this Government should commend the former President for taking these bold steps. I want to remind this House that we never applied for overdraft to pay salaries. I will not only say this, but I will also refer this House to the revenue collected by the previous Government. I will not read out the amount collected in every month, but please permit me to read the amount collected in January and February 2018. In January, 2018 the Government was able to collect **Le276.29 bln** and in February, 2018 when revenue were not collected as usual, the Government was able to collect over **Le289 bln**. What is the difference between **Le289 bln** and the most talk about **Le300 bln**? At that time, there were people expected to make more payments. I want to remind the Government of His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio that not all our revenue was collected at that time. We expected more than the **Le300 bln**. Let them go out and collect the balance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education. You will agree with me that the word `free` was introduced to our Economy by the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, when he introduced the `Free Health Care programme.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I want to draw your attention to S.O. 38[1].

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am rounding up now. I knew S.O. 38[1] was going to be raised against me. I was reminding this House that the word `free` was introduced by the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, when he

introduced the Free Health Care programme. The strategy he used was that the suppliers or service providers for the Free Health Care programme were the doctors and nurses. What he did to get them committed into the free health care was to make sure that he doubled the salaries of all health workers, so that the Free Health Care programme is productive. Therefore, I want to implore the current President to double the salaries of teachers. May I also state here that even the current salaries of our teachers were increased considerably by the erstwhile President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I asked myself an inevitable rhetorical question whether the Government has conducted a survey to know how many pupils want to go to school, but do not have the uniforms? Has there been any provision in terms of furniture, classrooms, teachers and school buildings? What I am envisaging that our schools will be inundated with pupils who have not even gone to school since the Pope was an altar boy. There has not been any increase in the number of furniture, classrooms and teachers. I am envisaging that some people are going to be deprived. I am saying this because, for the fact that the President has withdrawn the support provided to University students, I am looking at this proposal as an attempt to promote Primary and Secondary Education, thereby depriving the most important sector of our education, which is the tertiary education. This is because they will not be paying the **70%** of the tuition fees and the number of University dropouts will increase considerably. This is going to be catastrophic for a country like Sierra Leone.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Mr Speaker, I rise on 38[3] and the proviso under it.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Paramount Chief. I have allocated time to various speakers based on the list I received and it is on that note I have been appealing to the Honourable Member to be a little more considerate in the use of time.

HON. P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: I agreed with you, Mr Speaker, but just be specific on the time factor.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for graciously delivered this Speech in this House. I have followed the President making speeches across the country on different occasions. He used to say, 'it is a new dawn in the history of Sierra Leone.' Indeed 'it is a new dawn.' This means it is not politics as usual, but a new beginning and a "New Direction for Sierra Leone. The question we are still asking ourselves is that what direction are we heading to?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the first paragraph of the Presidential Address, the President thanked the people of Sierra Leone for electing him, but I was shocked and disappointed at the President's advertent exclusion of the atrocities that happened in Sierra Leone after the general elections. Indeed, it is a 'New Direction' wherein the people of Sierra Leone were asked to forcefully migrate from areas where they have settled for a very long period. Majority were born and bred in those areas but the 'New Direction' has forced them to migrate to places they have never lived before. Is this the 'New Direction?'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President referred to Sierra Leone as having the worst Economy ever since independence. After the elections, we envisaged a situation in which poor market women [traders], who are also contributing to the growth of this country's Economy, had their markets burnt down. This is not mentioned in the President's maiden Speech. I want to ask my colleagues to behave honourably because the world is watching us.

Mr Speaker, the President spoke about lawlessness; and in Paragraph 2, he also spoke about discipline, integrity, efficiency, professionalism and delivery. I was shocked when the President could not, at any point, ask the Police to bring the perpetrators of all these violence to book. Is this the new method of addressing lawlessness?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that our democracy is under attack and if we fail to address this issue in this Well of Parliament, we are moving our country to a 'New Direction' that could worsen the condition of our people more than what happened in Kenya. The people of Sierra Leone, for the very first time,

have designed a system of Government wherein the opposition Members of Parliament are in majority. This political arrangement is farfetched from what we used to have in this country and that is how they designed it and this is how they wanted it. In other words, they wanted the Opposition to be in majority in Parliament. They voted for the Mayor and other local Councillors for the Opposition. We have to respect these political arrangements.

HON. HINDOLO M. GAVAO: Mr Speaker, I had wanted to stand on S.O. 32[5]. I think there are procedures in every public meeting like this. For us Lawyers, when you see a colleague stands, you have to sit down. Mr Speaker, S.O. 32[5] it reads: **"A Member must confine his observation to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matters irrelevant thereto."** My submission is that the Honourable Member is talking about events that happened in this Well or events which were not captured in the Presidential Address. The Order Paper reads: **"We the Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President for address he so graciously delivered."** We are discussing the Presidential Address delivered in this Well. We cannot digress to issues that were not part of the Presidential Address. We must confine ourselves to the Presidential Address.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you may proceed but please confine yourself to the content of the Speech.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am still addressing the Speech of the President. I drew my reference from Paragraph 2, where he spoke about disciplined leadership. Mr Speaker, I want to remind all and sundry that professionalism and academism are different from public debates. Today, I was just saying, in the presence of the Inspector General of Police and the Minister of Internal Affairs, that the Mayor of Freetown Municipality was attacked. Is this the 'New Direction?'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here emphatically that though elections have ended long before now, we still have people going around with vehicles

and machetes, threatening the lives of poor and harmless citizens in Freetown. Is that the 'New Direction?'

Mr Speaker, if we remove politics away from political delivery, Sierra Leone will move forward. When I read the Speech of His Excellency the President, I was tempted to move away from politics and face the reality. The Minister of Education is here with us and those who went to school before the introduction of the 6334 will say the greatest injustice is about to happen in our nation. For some of us who went through the SSS 3 System of education will emphatically say the removal of the SSS4 at this time is not timely. But I will also say that the introduction of the SSS 4 was not timely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I am saying is that majority of our people did seven years in primary school, five years in secondary school [lower and upper six] and went to preliminary before proceeding to mainstream courses. If you calculate the years, you will find out that they are many. This was not waste of time and quality education was provided. Today, if you look at the Senior Secondary Schools SSS syllabi, they are meant three years or nine terms. In your days, I wish to be corrected, but there was nothing like Prize Giving, thanks giving or sporting activities that takes almost a month of the academic calendar. This is why BECE results do not come out until after the first term. Therefore syllabi we have could not be covered in two years and six terms.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the area of the youth sector, I am happy when the President said he was going to review issues surrounding the youth. I asked myself if the 'New Direction' is going to review a system they called a failed system. Where are we heading to? If you review a system you have described as a 'failed system,' it also means you are going to fail. The youth are no more future leaders. I want to thank the former President, His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, who gave us this platform as young people to serve in various capacities. We have a barrage of young people below the age of 35 years in this House. The question is, how many youth do we have in this Cabinet? There is a difference between 'youth' and 'young people.' In the last approval

of presidential nominees, we saw 'young people' and not 'youth.' We are still looking for youth.

THE SPEAKER: Some of us consider ourselves as youth when we are not. My definition of youth is the function of performance and not of chronology.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, according to the President's maiden Speech, he was referring to the youth as people below the age of 35 years and I know you are very qualified because you are active.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Youth Service Scheme is ongoing and it has been launched. I hope the review process will not bring another division. In the agricultural sector for the youth, we have the Youth Farm and we have also established same in other districts in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about zero tolerance to corruption. I think if there is any other thing the President talked about during his campaign and on the day of his inaugural speech, here he said zero tolerance to corruption. I want to ask if we know the procedures involved in normal procurement. Does that match to what we saw in the inaugural programme? Mr Speaker, no sacred cows for corruption. When the Honourable Member from Kenema was opening the debates, he said 'the President painted the picture.' When people talk about paint, the first thing that comes to mind is the fact that the picture is not true and that is why it is painted. You do not need to paint the picture, but to tell us the picture as it is. Our country is on the move and it cannot be taken backwards. Sierra Leoneans are willing to move forward. We are opening the minds of Sierra Leoneans to understand that where we are is not where we supposed to be. My colleague from Kenema could not read the Speech because there was no electricity in his house and that was why he was telling us that the President painted a picture. There was no need for the President to paint a picture. He should have told us the reality. Presently, there is no electricity in the city and the people are grumbling. What the people voted for was a system that promised them to cook every day, but the people are without food to eat and we are still waiting for that.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 32[13]. Mr Speaker, my colleague on the other side basically was putting out information I did not make here probably he did not understand the point I was making. When you paint a picture, you want to vividly make people understand the circumstance and the situation that have occurred. He said I did not read the document and that 'the President painted a picture.' It means he did not understand what I was saying and I want him to withdraw those utterances.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member might have misunderstood, but you have clarified the situation. I will allow him to continue.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: I want him to clarify it. Thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I want to talk about economic diversification. Diversifying the Economy is very important for us as a country. We witnessed a situation in which Sierra Leone had twin shocks; i.e., drop in the price of iron ore and the outbreak of the Ebola epidemic. It is only those who play politics with the minds and hearts of Sierra Leoneans will undermine the important of the two shocks. Therefore, diversifying the Economy is very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about music and performing art. I was shocked when I saw mammoth of international artists to celebrate the President's birthday during the inaugural ceremony. The local content policy has been bastardised and washed out. Where is the 'New Direction' taking us to? What we promised our people is to address the nation and the people. Where are we as a country? We are willing to support our brothers on the other side to promote Sierra Leone. What is important for us is the development of Sierra Leone. Praying for the SLPP to fail is like sentencing Sierra Leone to backwardness. For the past ten years, we tried our best to develop this country. We are very sure that by 2023, we will be on the other side because we are certain that the 'New Direction' is ready to take us aback. This is a 'New Direction' that does not have a specific location because its destination could not be good for this country. Mr Speaker, we need not waste our precious time on this, but the truth is that we do not see any iota of 'political will' to address corruption and political

violence. Again, we do not see any commitment of inclusion of youth and young people in governance. We are coming from a regime wherein the ex-President told us that we are the young people and we are the people that should determine the future of this country; therefore, we must be given a fair platform to perform.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you before evoking S.O. [38] on me and I hope you enjoyed the benefit of our present status. We want more platforms as young people. Let it be hammered home that young people are asking for more. We do not want deputies anymore, but substantive Cabinet Ministers. That is what the TRC recommended and we want **12%** youth representation in governance. We are not asking for much. I want to state here that Mr Lahai Lawrence Leema deserves more being a Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs. He has taken a lot of risk for the SLPP. We want more young people to be represented in Cabinet positions.

THE SPEAKER: He was only serving his apprenticeship.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you Sir. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this House that the city is dark. We saw a calculated ploy by the writers of this to conceal the truth from the people. I want to be specific this time around because I will not say the President, but the writers who wrote this Speech connived to destroy the good image of our democratic dispensation and the development of this nation. As the saying goes, 'to thyself be true,' but we have moved from where we were and we are moving forward. If we are moving forward, let us be truthful to ourselves. The former President and his led Government has laid the platform for the development of this nation. I want to inform this House that any government that fails to recognise the works of the former government could not be sincere.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the free education is badly needed in this country because ever since the SLPP came to power, we have been seeing press releases from State House with grammatical errors. Free education is important and it is needed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me end my contribution by thanking my constituents Tala and Kambai Section and the Paramount Chief is here, representing

that part of the country. Commenting on the undertone made by Honourable Bashiru Silikie when he said that for the past ten years, the representative of seat I occupy now was not active in parliamentary debates, but I am here to represent my people. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. CHARLES O. ABDULAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my people in Bumpoh Gao, I want to thank the President for the marvellous Speech delivered on the 10th May, 2018. I would like to react to some of the issues being discussed by Honourable Members on the other side.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the speakers spoke about the roads constructed by the APC led Government in the past ten years. We agreed that road infrastructure is good, but there are certain things I would want to say in that regard; i.e., the quality and cost effectiveness. The roads constructed by the APC led Government like the Wilkinson Road was not only expensive, but of poor quality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people have been saying that Sierra Leone is the fastest growing Economy in 2013. During this period, the iron ore helped to boost our Economy. But during our economic boom, the APC led Government did not make any reserve. They did not make hay while the sun shines at all. That was the time the APC led Government increased its expenditure. They indulged in overseas travels, buying fanciful cars and expending haphazardly. When the price of iron ore plummeted in the World Market, our Economy shrank to a level where this country could no longer able to provide for its citizens.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw your attention to the Speech delivered by the President. I want to refer the House to Pages 1 and 2, Paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5. If you look at the second paragraph, the President said he was going to translate the campaign promises into corporate actions. This is a President who believes in reality. In fact, after I have read the Speech, I was tempted to call it a research paper presented. Paragraph 2 talks about this country's 'worst economic situation,' which is the pivot of the Speech. The Economic situation in this country can be read in the faces of people except a few like Honourable Members and APC top stalwarts.

When the President said the 'Economy is worst since independence,' he supported his assertion with evidence. This is indeed a research paper drawn from existing literature and observation on the faces of people. He spoke about high domestic and external debts. In view of these, the President outlined five strategies that will correct this situation. These are: disciplined leadership, integrity, efficiency, professionalism and service delivery. This President believes in effective and efficient service delivery. He is a result-oriented somebody. I am glad that the ministers are here and I want to inform them that they have been called upon by the President to implement the objectives set in this Address. I want to remind them that they have limited timeframe to achieve these objectives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about the dwindling nature of our Economy since 2016 to 2017. He said 'real economic growth rate slumped to **3.5%** in 2017 from **6.3%** in 2016. This is how our Economy degenerated after the price of iron ore plummeted. Therefore, he said that he was going to diversify the Economy by using the Marine and Fishing Industries. This is because we depended on mining activities; and when we had a drop in the price of iron ore, here we are.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to look at Paragraph 5, under Agricultural. This is an area that has been neglected for far too long. When you hear Agriculture, what comes to mind is food security, especially rice, which is our staple food. The projections in the first half of 2017 and 2018 were **\$108mln** and **\$200mln** respectively. Honourable Members, let us look at the way we spend on rice importation. When some of us were small boys, our people used to say 'we were exporting rice.' They used to have lots of agricultural projects that increased local rice production. Again, cash crop production increased considerably. We had the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board [SLPMB]. Today, this area is not paid attention to, but the President promised to make Agriculture attractive. He wants a mechanised type of Agriculture. Over **80%** of our youth have abandoned the farmlands and migrated to the urban cities and they are now motorbike riders, some are seeking for greener pastures whilst

others are miscreants. Agriculture has not been paid attention to by the APC Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was tempted to say we were making gains when I saw tractors being imported to this country. I am coming from a Constituency where we have fertile farmlands like the bolilands. When I saw those tractors I thought there were going to be sent to the Constituencies or Chiefdoms where they have arable lands; but to my dismay, these tractors are on roads, carrying fire wood or stationed behind the houses of party supporters of the APC. The President is ready to reform this sector. He has started reviewing our tax system and institutions. So, it cannot be viewed as a vague manifesto, but a real speech that the President wants to achieve at the end of his term.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agricultural Sector is one of the flagship programmes of His Excellency the President as presented in the document. It is difficult to hear people talk on radios or write stories explaining the achievement we have made as a country in Agriculture.

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

HON. CHARLES O. ABDULAI: Mr Speaker, the percentage of hungry people in this country is very high. Therefore, the President has promised food and income from the Agricultural Sector. Gains that will be made in the Agricultural Sector will be added to what we will get from the Mining Sector. This is why the President said he would diversify the Economy of this country, instead of relying on the Mining Sector.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much.

[The House was adjourned for lunch at 12:15 p.m. and resumed at 12.45 p.m.]

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for the Address he graciously delivered in this House. My debate is going to be very brief. I want to draw the attention of this House to Section 9[2b&c] of

the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone that talks about 'free compulsory basic education.' It is really out-dated, but His Excellency thought it fit to bring it to this Nation because it is now time for us to have this privilege and rights. In fact, Sierra Leone has appended her signature to United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child. That document talks about the right of every child to be educated. The president did not specify children from Tonkolili, Bombali or Bo, but every child has the right to education. This is why the President thought it fit to introduce free education for the children of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 13 of the Address, where the President has allocated **20%** of the annual budget of this country to education. You will agree with me that without education, none of us would have been in this House. This is because the requirement for you to be a Member of Parliament is that you must be able to read and write proficiently in English. I want to applaud the President for taking these bold steps. This 1991 Constitution was written during the Presidency of Joseph Saidu Momoh. Two successive Presidents; i.e., Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba and Dr Ernest Bai Koroma administered this country through the 1991 Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here to inform this Honourable House that I am disappointed by the former President's extravagant spending of this country's money. In that regard, I want to refer the House to Page 16 of the handing over notes of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. He said he was going to ensure 'economic proficiency' by reducing cost on the Nation's expenditure, but we have seen **\$270mln** being spent extravagantly on substandard developments. The former President introduced austerity measures, but the sum of **\$270mln** was spent on development that we call a sub-standard development. Is that what you call austerity measure?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was also disappointed when the former President said that the debt situation in this country is nothing to worry about. If you look at Page 6 of his handing over notes, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma stated it clearly that we should not worry about this country's debt situation. However, I want to state here that when you

are indebted, you are like a slave. My Honourable Member was making reference to the IMF and I must remind this House that the IMF uses its meagre resources to generate high revenue from us through interest rates. Recently, officials from a particular organisation came to Members of Parliament, asking them to open bank accounts with them, Members of Parliament would benefit from **Le150mIn** loan scheme. I want to state here that we cannot underestimate the magnitude of **\$2bln** and **Le4.9tn** debts. Dr Ernest Bai Koroma did not say anything serious about this country's indebtedness. He instead underestimated what should have been done.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues talked about the Health Sector. You would recall that when the Ebola disease broke out in Sierra Leone, we had an Executive Assistant to the office of the President [*Interruption*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, my attention has been drawn to S.O. 35 [5].

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: As I was saying, the Executive Assistant to the President is a trained medical practitioner and she advised the President about the seriousness of the Ebola Virus which should not be treated with levity. Her advised was underestimated and that was why we paid the price. Some people are saying that 28,000 people died in Sierra Leone; whilst others are saying 7,000 people. I want to turn your attention to the technical point. If we received thousands of burial bags in Sierra Leone, and then somebody said we have run out of burial bags, what happened to those burial bags?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw your attention to the Auditor General's Report, which states that the sum of **\$14bln** was never accounted for. Again, ambulances were provided to all chiefdoms. However, I want to inform this Honourable House that I come from a ruling home and my elder brother, who is Paramount Chief, was called at Youyi Building, to sign for an ambulance. We inspected the ambulance; but for no good reason, the ambulance disappeared in our chiefdom.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have very good reasons to work towards achieving the content of this Speech for the progress of this Nation. I want to thank you very much for listening.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. He was kind enough to accede to my request. He was kind enough to utilise eleven minutes.

HON. CECILIA M. BANGURA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a timely day that we, as representatives of our various Constituencies, are gathered here to discuss the socio-economic and political issues affecting this Nation. The President, Dr Julius Maada Bio, in his maiden Speech to the people's representatives, outlined many issues. I would like to limit my contributions to women. I would like to first of all start by thanking the President for paying special attention to women's empowerment. This is because this is one of the engines for economic growth in any developing country like Sierra Leone. In his 'New Direction' agenda, the President committed himself to promoting gender equality, empowerment and the protection. He spoke about the rights of women, either as mainstream intervention or as stand-alone initiative, which I hope he is going to deliver.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I see Rtd Julius Maada Bio's commitment to women's empowerment as a continuation of our former President, His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's commitment to empowering women. During the former President's tenure of office, many women were appointed as ministers, deputy ministers, ambassadors, deputy ambassadors, etc. Some were also appointed as heads of parastatals, heads of departments and agencies, etc. He was also the first President that appointed the first Chief Justice in this Republic, Her Excellency, Umu Hawa Tejan Jalloh [*Applause from the APC Bench*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, at the international level, the former President supported capable Sierra Leonean women to serve in various leadership positions. For example, Honourable Dr Bernadette Lahai, the former Minority Leader of the SLPP in this Honourable House, received the full support of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma to be elected as Vice President of the Pan-African Parliament. Again, Dr Zainab Hawa Bangura

received the full support of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma in her bid for the position of Under Secretary-General to the United Nations. Recently, Madam Finda Koroma received the full support of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma when she was vying for the position of Vice President of the ECOWAS Commission.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I come from the Karene District, which happens to be the new district in the North–West Region of Sierra Leone. I want to report to this House that the women in my Constituency are deprived. They need the required capacity to enter into mainstream politics and engage in meaningful entrepreneurship. Therefore, my people, especially the women, need development fund to support them acquire skills training and to empower them in their small businesses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this Honourable House that violence and intimidation have recently become a trend that limit our women folks to participate in mainstream politics. Sierra Leoneans need to be engaged in so many ways in terms of sensitising them to accept women in this country. For example, May 23rd incident against the Mayor of Freetown sent a negative signal to the world and this Nation. Is that the 'New Direction?' Our supporters are being intimidated and molested by SLPP supporters after the 2018 General Elections.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am kindly asking for the appointment of more women to positions of trust. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I will now give the Floor to the Honourable Paramount Chief, although his name is not on my list. I am using my discretion to call on him to make his contribution.

HON P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Though I am not prepared for today, but I will seize this opportunity to make my contribution. I have heard from both sides of the isle and my contribution is going to be simple. Today marks the beginning of the debate on the Presidential Speech. I am urging both sides to be logical in their submissions. In other words, we should not make the debate too

political. I am happy the present Speaker has been a Deputy Minister and everybody knows that he was a firebrand in this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I was never a Deputy Minister. I was a substantive Minister.

HON P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: I thank you, Mr Speaker for the correction. At this point, we have to graciously thank the President for the statement he made and hold him at bay to see that he delivers. I am sure he is willing to deliver, but he cannot do that alone. As Sierra Leoneans, we should not attack each other. The Presidential Speech talks about key elements of developments for every Sierra Leonean. All we need is to pray for the content of this Speech to be materialised. Therefore, as Sierra Leoneans, whether we are on the left or right hand side of the Speaker, we cannot afford to fail. We cannot afford to be backward. Whether it is APC or SLPP, we should think that we are building a Nation. America, Great Britain and Rome were not built in a day. So, whether you are on this side or not, let us continue to build this Nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was a member of the National Board of Education, appointed in 1992 and I was a member of the Scholarship Award Committee. Interestingly, we used to interview applicants from all over the country in Freetown in the rainy seasons. We found out that the applicants who were coming from Masingbi, Makali, Kailahun, Bo, Kenema and other places were finding it difficult to come to Freetown. The National Board of Education decided that all those from the Northern Province should go to Makeni, those from the Eastern province should go to Kenema, etc. We divided the Scholarships equally among the four regions. This happened in 1992 and Mr Lengo Koroma was the Chief Education Officer and Mr Bobson Sesay was the Deputy Education Officer.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, under the leadership of Dr Minkailu Bah, we urged him to divide it by district, so that applicants in Tonkolili would go to Magburaka, those in Bombali would go to Makeni, etc. They had fourteen political districts. This was what we did and it is what is happening now. Applicants from Masingbi should go to

Magburaka for interview. Therefore, the Honourable Members who were saying that Grants-in-Aid scholarships were only awarded to certain regions were misinforming the public.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time when the former Minister of Education, Dr Minkailu Bah became very unpopular in Sierra Leone. Dr Minkailu Bah was invited to this House by the SLPP to respond to certain queries. He came here and spoke about the forgery that was taking place in the Ministry of Education by the teachers. He showed the number of teachers with forged certificates all over Sierra Leone. He was given a standing ovation in this Well. He later became the friend of Honourable Foday Rado Yokie.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the Leader of Government Business was here when Dr Minkailu Bah, former Minister of Education, came to this House and explained many issues. He was very bold to tell this House that there were teachers using one certificate. He brought the evidence here and Dr Minkailu Bah was able to save billions of Leones from ghost teachers. He saved a lot of money the government was paying to ghost teachers. The evidence are with the Ministry of Finance. I am here to say the truth and I am known for that. I am very happy for the appointment made by the President in the person of Dr Alpha Timbo and I want to thank him for that. I will work with him and I will do everything possible to see that his programmes succeed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education. I am going to support the President. We have the Education for All [EFA] and Health for All [HFA], and Sierra Leone has never achieved those projects. There are other pillars we have never achieved. Today, we have 'Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] and we have about 17 SDGs. Goal no. 1 is 'End Poverty in all forms and everywhere;' goal no. 2 is 'End Hunger;' goal no. 3 is 'ensuring healthy life and promote wellbeing for all.' So, the President emphasised on education and I think that is the key element that will develop Sierra Leone. I am happy because the Minister of Technical and Tertiary Education is here to take notes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask this House, through its leadership to summon all Permanent Secretaries to come and witness this debate. This has always been a tussle to bring them here. During last year's Presidential debate, we did not commence that debate until the next day because of the conspicuous absence of these Permanent Secretaries. They should be here to listen to comments we are making. The Presidential Address and the Budget Speech are two important documents wherein Members of Parliament can make their contributions and comments. The President is expected to work with a team and that team should be here. Members of Parliament have been raising many issues and those responsible to implement this document should be here. We are not just here to thank the President, but to also raise issues that are of national importance. Therefore, the team has to come here and take notes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues on my left should stop attacking Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. He has kept the peace for the past ten years and we have to continue to build on that progress. Let us work towards putting in place new innovations that will help this country. I will not urge any opposition Member of Parliament to start criticising the President at this time because he is new in office. Officially, his term started on the 10th May, 2018. Again, Parliament was officially opened on the 10th May and not on the 4th or 5th March or April respectively. I stand to be corrected. I want to remind all of us that the President's 'New Direction' agenda is very challenging. For example, if you are talking about 'Education for all,' we need enough money to build more classrooms; if you are going to provide 'education for all,' you should have enough money to recruit the teachers who are going to teach; and we should have enough money to hire supervisors who are going to supervise the schools. Expressing the willingness is not enough, but implementing your intention is very important. Again, are the people ready to pay more taxes? Everybody in this House is saying yes, but when we were asked to pay **Le10mIn** as nomination fee to contest elections, we protested [*Undertone*]. You will be collecting the toll gate levies and not the APC.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Paramount Chief, I am sure you will agree with me that I have been extremely lenient with you. Please conclude your contribution.

HON P.C. BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: After I have listened and read the Presidential Address, I did some research on the Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs]. I found out that the President's Address touched on all 17 SDGs. If what is contained in the Presidential Address is implemented, it would also mean achieving the SDGs. Therefore, I am urging every Sierra Leonean to support His Excellency to succeed because if he succeeds, then we are going to succeed and our grandchildren are also going to succeed. I want to urge all SLPP Members of Parliament to stop attacking the former President. Let us think about how we are going to build a better nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand here to graciously thank His Excellency the President for this Address. I hope and pray that he succeeds, so that Sierra Leone will be a proud nation. We want a situation wherein if we go out of this country, we will not be called Mendes, Temnes, Limbas, Kurankos, APC or SLPP, but we will say we are Sierra Leoneans. When we go to the Pan-African Parliament, we are Sierra Leoneans. Let us work towards developing this country and Sierra Leone a safe haven for ourselves and investors. Let us make Sierra Leone a better place for all of us. We have to improve ourselves. I am sure all of us met houses built by our fathers, but we are now building modern houses. I am simply saying that the past government have built, we are going to rebuild, reconstruct and make Sierra Leone attractive. We hope you will do better than what the former President has done for this country. This is our prayer and if you fail to do what you told the people of this country, then you should get ready to face the wrath because the people are going to react fiercely.

Once again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to wish Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio well. I want him and his ministers to succeed. I was very happy when I heard Members of the SLPP urging their ministers to perform and they should not disappoint the people of Sierra Leone. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Paramount Chief on behalf of the House. I think we should thank him more for these informative and very enlightened contributions. Just a point of correction for the benefit of all of us because it has a constitutional bearing. I think you stammered over the commencement of this House, but the answer should be found in Section 85 of the 1991 Constitution. It has a very significant implication that we know the precise date of commencement of this House because Parliament stands dissolved at the end of the 5th Anniversary from that date unless it is prior dissolved by the President, it stands dissolved automatically. If it is not dissolved by the President before the end of its 5th Anniversary of existence, so let us have that correct date and the commencement date is to be found in Section 85 of the 1991 Constitution.

Having said that, Honourable Members, let me further take this opportunity to thank the ministers who have spent time with us. I think they have done a very good job and I want to encourage them to continue to attend this debate until Friday, when we shall call on them to respond to the various contributions made. We hope, with their presence here, others who are absent will be encouraged to follow their example. I know some ministries are absent, both substantive ministers and their deputies. In fact, all the deputy ministers you approved in this House last Thursday will subscribe to the oath of office tomorrow. You know that they cannot strictly commence the discharge of their responsibilities and duties under Sections 87 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. Therefore, we will show some understanding for those ministries whose deputies are not here; but for substantive ministers who are otherwise engaged, we expect them to be represented by their deputies. We shall now return to the list of speakers, having heard from that eloquent contribution from the Honourable Paramount Chief.

HON ALIMAMY B. KANU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank you again for the advice you gave to Members of Parliament that new speakers should be encouraged. Also, I want to thank the Honourable Paramount Chief who advised that we should not criticise this document at this time. I want to say we are not actually criticising this

document, but rather we have some facts to prove in this House. This is the 'New Direction' and we want to focus our attention to this document. In Paragraph 2 of the Presidential Address, the President emphasised on disciplined leadership and that is the area I am interested in this document. However, I do not know whether the 'New Direction' is ready to instil discipline in this country. I am saying this because in less than two months after they have taken over the administration of this country, the office of the Chief of Staff was dissolved and when the Chief Minister took over office, he sacked over hundred staff who were working in the defunct office of the Chief of Staff. This action has not been communicated to the public and we are still waiting to hear from the government. We also saw a rapid transfer of staff based on ethnicity. The public is aware of this and we have also seen the dismissal of all Sierra Leonean diplomats. So, we saw a situation wherein the President sacked diplomatic staff. We also saw where the Minister of Lands issued out Ministerial Order to forcefully impose a curfew.

HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 32[4].

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member for your observation, but certainly I have not observed him reading.

HON. ALIMAMY B. KANU: God bless you, Mr Speaker. This shows that the Speaker is impartial. So, we saw the forceful imposition of curfew by the Minister of Lands. Is this how the 'New Direction' is going to govern this country? Again, the diamond that was found by poor citizens of this country was later announced as an ordinary stone. This is the second time in the history of the Sierra Leone People's Party for a good diamond to metamorphose into stone

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think you are overstretching your statement. You said 'a good diamond' is being turned into stone. Do you have any evidence of that?

HON. ALIMAMY B. KANU: Again, we also saw during the inaugural ceremony how funds collected for that purpose were not communicated to the public.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, we should be careful about the statements we make in this House. Let us try to be as accurate as possible because the public is looking to you for leadership and guidance. I want you to substantiate your statement or I will ask you to withdraw.

HON. ALIMAMY B. KANU: But this is also based on public allegations and I think the public is aware. We have also seen how the Mayor of Freetown Municipality was manhandled and we have not heard any statement from the government regarding that incident.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I do not think you are again on sound footings because I am sure Honourable Members would have seen in the media that the diamond or the stone alleged to be a diamond was properly tested and discovered to be a stone. So please let us say things as they are.

HON. ALIMAMY B. KANU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the 'New Direction,' we have witnessed the forceful removal of Members of Parliament from this Well and no statement has been made to date. I am very concerned about disciplined leadership the President spoke about. Let us see what the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think I have been very lenient. You have exhausted your 10 minutes.

HON. PAUL S. SAM: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President for this wonderful Speech he delivered in this Well. Of course, the C4C Members of Parliament will take a different approach in terms of making our comments, observations and recommendations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by addressing the issue raised my brother, who said that over thirty years, Koidu City was in perpetual darkness. He also said that the APC led Government brought electricity. I want to remind him that it was the APC that destroyed the electricity supply and they also brought it. Another speaker

spoke about the issue of Water in Kono. If you look at the water reservoir in Kono District, it was destroyed by mining activities and nothing was done about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start with the Agriculture. My Constituency comprised of four Chiefdoms. The APC led Government established Agricultural Business Units in those Chiefdoms, but over the years, those units never yielded dividend. This would have been a very good initiative. In this Address, I noticed that the President has a better plan to ensure that Agriculture is improved for proper production of cash crops. Over the years, we have also seen illegal settlement of ranches in agricultural areas. We have seen how the youth are leaving their areas to go to mining areas. The issue of Agriculture is not being improved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, my Constituency has 156 teachers, but only 51 teachers are approved. Out of the 52 Community Schools that we have, 11 of them are approved by the government. So, when you look at the proposed 'Free Education,' the approval of teachers and schools should also be part of it. This is why the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education should be here to listen to this particular statement because they are going to implement this document.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please go ahead. The deputy Minister is here.

HON. PAUL S. SAM: I want their presence in this Well because these recommendations I am going to make should be taken into consideration. This is because if the 'New Direction' is to succeed, they need the key players; i.e., the ministers and deputy ministers. They are responsible to implement these programmes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was saying that out of the 52 Schools, only 11 are approved. The community schools are approximately 42. So, the 'New Direction' has to be mindful this. We have barely four to five months before the commencement of the 'Free Education' programme. The Minister needs to take that into consideration and works towards it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, amongst the 156 teachers I was talking about in my Constituency, only 51 of them are approved. If 51 teachers are approved within a

particular area where we have about 52 schools, then there is going to be a huge problem. Therefore, the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education needs to take that into consideration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at Page 15 of this Address, the President mentioned that every section will have a primary school, and every chiefdom will have a Junior Secondary School, and every Constituency will have a Senior Secondary School. If you look at the distance between the existing schools, as far as our Constituencies are concerned, if you erect or approve a school in a particular area, it means pupils in other areas will be deprived because the free primary education will be discouraged. So, the Minister needs to take that into consideration in terms of ensuring that Community Schools in our Constituencies are considered. The issue of approval of teachers should also be looked into if the 'New Direction' is to succeed.

Also, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the educational sector has been dwindling over the years. I would have loved the President to add more schools in this document because the numbers of Community Schools in our Constituencies are more than government-assisted schools. If they want to succeed, then they need to also look into the Community Schools and bring them on board in terms of providing support they could need.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, I want to also make another submission regarding the much talked about potentials. When we talk about potential, it is the dormant ability that lies within somebody which needs to be stirred. For the past ten years, people were drinking sugarless tea, though there is a kind of sugar that could have been used. The cube of sugar should be in the tea, but has to be stirred by somebody to sweeten the tea. I want to believe the 'New Direction' will stir the cube of sugar in the tea, so that all of us will drink a very sweet tea. For the past ten years, there were cubes of sugar in the tea, but it was tasteless.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said before, we are going to look at the issues and caution the ministers because they are the ones implementing the 'New Direction' agenda. They have to be very much mindful of the use of public funds because we do

not want to go back to the olden days. We Members of Parliament are ready to support the ministers to succeed because if they succeed, the Nation succeeds. They need not to be profligate our funds, but use them wisely, so that Sierra Leone succeeds. For us in the C4C, we want to say we support the President's Speech, but the issue of education needs to be addressed. Of course, some of us were part of education over the years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure the private schools and some other schools will be empty. This means enrolment into the government-assisted schools is going to increase more than ever. As I have said before, I have 34 schools and only 4 are approved. So, if you say 30 community schools are to be transformed into government-assisted schools, then there is going to be a very big problem. In that regard, I want to implore the minister to work very hard because we only have five months for us to start the free education.

With these few words, I want to thank you very much.

HON. ABU MANSARAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to once again thank our President, His Excellency Rtd Major Brigadier Julius Bio for the important issues raised in his Address. I want to however caution that there is need for reforms since we have got a new government. If there are to be reforms or changes, then they should be constructive. The changes should not only be carried out for change sake because a reformist can always build on the good works of his/her predecessor and make amendments where necessary *[Applause]*. We have seen what the erstwhile President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, has done for the people of this country. His reforms and developments are all over this country. I cannot elaborate on them now because the previous speakers have spoken about them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, despite the challenges he faced during his tenure of office, he was able to sail through and came up with laurels at the end of his tenure. It is sad to note here that the Presidential Address fails to mention the gains made by the former His Excellency Dr Ernest Bai Koroma and the challenges he encountered. In his handing over note, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma mentioned the tremendous role played by His

Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio in the fight against the Ebola virus. This shows statesmanship.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about education because it is the key to success. For the other areas of development, the previous speakers have elaborated on them and even cited examples that can be seen with our naked eyes. They also spoke about what is expected of the SLPP led Government. The SLPP led Government should focus on building the foundation Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has established.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is more to be done as far as education is concerned. Sincerely speaking, our education is still old-fashioned. His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio must focus on building the solid foundation left by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. The former President has developed our educational system and it is still teacher-focused, not learner-focused. It should be based now on creativity and building self-esteem and independence. This is because we are now living in a global world and we should shape our educational system to match international standards. We still have much to be done in that area.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, former President Mandela of South Africa once said in his statement on 'globalisation' that 'we are engulfed in a globalised world it is like living in Europe in winter, if you are not prepared, you will freeze to death.' Globalisation cannot be thrown aside and we should get our children prepared to face international competitions and to get better jobs. If you want to get job, we have to prepare our kids. We should equip our schools and tailor our courses to meet international standards. We have seen what Dr Ernest Bai Koroma has done and we can build on that foundation and introduce new innovations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about school buses in the cities. This is injustice being meted on poor children who are living in the rural communities. They deserve the same facilities. We are aware of the fact that there are more schools in the cities, but in the rural communities, poor children always walk on bare feet to go to schools. They walk in the hot burning sun and even in the rain. These are the people

who were shouting Maada Bio during the campaign period. And very soon they will start shouting if I knew [if a bin know, S.O [2], because you have abandoned them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me come to the Economy. The problem with our Economy is a chronic one and one regime cannot be held responsible for what is happening to our Economy. Our export structure has been the same since independence. We have been exporting raw materials like iron ore, rutile, bauxite, cacao and coffee. So, you cannot hold any government responsible for that. We have started seeing transformations during the Dr Ernest Bai Koroma regime. We have also started seeing a revolution in the service industry, value addition and packaging. What we expect this government to do is to build on that. Your criticisms should be constructive. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

HON. SHEKU M. TURAY: I want to take this opportunity to say many thanks to His Excellency the President Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. I want to look at this Speech from a different perspective, maybe on policy issue because of my background. I want to start by looking at the Speech generally. The Address presents research basis upon which the current context had operated. The Address brings out issues and even tries to provide solutions to those issues by putting them into programmes and policies *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us look at what the 'New Direction' is saying. It is not saying that what the APC led Government did was wrong and it is not also saying what you did was correct, but there were complications during the course of delivering services to the people. Therefore, once you start by looking at this Address in this perspective, you will be able to know its content. The Speech talked about disciplined leadership. The disciplined leadership the President is talking about is different from what people are talking about. Disciplined leadership, in this context, is talking about how to deliver services to the people effectively, professionally and efficiently *[Applause]*. It is all about how you deliver services to the people. If certain services were not delivered in the last ten years, the 'New Direction' is going to look at the

challenges that prevented you from delivering those services. Therefore, this Address is looking at what you have done, where we are and review where necessary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the different sectors, the Address spoke about policy review, reforms, reassigned and strategic actions to be taken. We have to look at strategic actions and it does not matter the time you came to power, but we have to look at it properly to find out if you did it properly or not. This is because our policy process in this country is very difficult to understand. There are leakages in this country and we need to put policies in place that will enable us to deliver development programmes. When policies are weak, it is recipe for corruption to thrive. People will engage in doing the wrong thing, thereby becoming corrupt. Some policies are geared towards aiding corruption. Therefore, the President has asked us to review those regulations and strengthen where necessary.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here we part of the process of developing this country. We should contribute towards the development of this country. We should learn to critically examine issues instead of embroiling in criticising somebody who has just presented a Speech without acting on it. This is what the APC Members of Parliament are doing. Let us look at the decentralisation policy or perhaps, the Local Government Councils Act. The relationships among the various actors are so complicated that they have the tendency to affect efficient service delivery at the local tiers. If we do not look at the aspect of relationship in terms of who should get or do what, no matter the amount of resources and energy we put in our local governance system, we will always experience difficulties. This will deter us from delivering efficient services to the people. We have to address those issues by putting in place policies which we think will help in this regard. We have to review existing policies with all sincerity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at the recruitment process in the Local Government. I cannot precisely quote from the Act, but there is a provision in that Act which has to do with transfers of staff and the recruitment of Chief Administrators [CAs]. Those who have worked in those Local Councils will bear witness that the

relationship between the CAs and the District Councils Chairpersons has always been strenuous. There has never been a cordial relationship between them in terms of service delivery. The recruitment process of CAs has some complications, which the District Councils have little or no input and their allegiance is owed to the Local Government Service Commission. If you look at the devolution process, which is very slow, the Ministry retains the power to devolve functions. That is what we saw during the Ebola period. Some of the District Councils were very slow in responding to the issues the Ebola created. Those Councils had to wait on the Ministry to develop policies before the Councils could take action. These complications are always there and that is why we should look at those policies for possible review.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to look at donor engagements in the way we formulate our policies. If you look at our policies, some of them are donor-driven. This means the donors usually tell us to implement certain programmes, but you have to put in place certain policies before a particular programme is implemented. Well, the 'New Direction' is not going to deviate from this, but we are going to do it simultaneously. We are going to look at what has gone wrong and how we are going to incorporate it into our programmes. We are going to work in that direction, so that whatever achievements we will make, will reflect on the policies we have created or policies we want to redesign.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the youth and education sectors, the policy interactions between Ministries and Commissions; the Ministry of Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Education, and the Skill Accreditation System are very strenuous. The Ministry of Youth Affairs retains the policy aspect of designing programmes for the Youth Commission. Also, the skills training aspect of the youth is still the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. Again, the accreditation system, which is usually done by NCTVA, has now become a tug of war. The NCTVA used to issue out certificates which are recognised in this country, but the Ministry of Education also provides vocational training skills and curriculum for schools. The NCTVA is also required to provide the skills training and curriculum that is nationally recognised. So, those are the critical

areas we have to look at. I wanted to say this, maybe some of us will not understand properly, but the ministers should go and look at the existing programmes and policies and make necessary amendments or reforms. They should look at where the 'New Direction' is heading to. Go and look at where the previous ministers go wrong and how will you effectively and positive change things. You cannot do one thing and then leave the other because we have limited timeframe.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, delivering programmes is also part of the responsibility of ministers. If you look at the organisational structure of the various ministries like the Ministry of Finance, it has a Unit known as the IPU and the PFMRU. These are Programme Management Units. The distance between the ministers and these Units is also causing complications in the delivering of programmes that the Minister may not be aware. So, you have to look at these areas very critically. The recruitment of officials in that Ministry has to be looked at very critically, otherwise good programmes will be delivered wrongly and the Minister will be blamed. I am saying that these complications have to be looked at, so that the 'New Direction' succeeds. I am not here to criticise anybody, but what I am saying is just a proposal for the consideration of the Minister. I have decided to flag up these areas, so that we do things better than those who were there before. Perhaps, those who were there before did not do things satisfactorily to the benefit of the citizens. If all of us take active part in addressing those challenges, I am sure the next elections will put us in different capacities. Let us work as a team and then do things properly. Thank you very much.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have gone through the Presidential Speech and I am going to look at disciplined leadership, integrity, efficiency and professionalism and delivery.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member who is speaking is not properly dressed. The dress code in Parliament should be communicated to Members of Parliament. This is very important for us. Few days ago, there was another Member of Parliament who did not dress properly. I believe the

leadership of this House should communicate the dress code to Members of Parliament. That is my submission, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I want to thank the Honourable Member and to use this opportunity to add a word of caution that Members of this House are in a leadership position. They should be mindful of this and they should be able to lead by example at all times. I will therefore withdraw the permission given to the Honourable Member to speak until he is properly dressed before the House.

HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are gathered here today not only to thank His Excellency the President for delivering a detailed, explicit and well-structured speech, but to also reminisce on past administrations. I want to start with late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. In his handing over speech to the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, he stated emphatically that you are inheriting a state that is at the threshold of taking off for progress and prosperity. As part of the progress and prosperity for which he handed power to Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, he explained that there were roads he had already completed and those roads he mentioned were Koribondo/Blama Road, the Gendema/Ferry Road, Makeni/Kamakwei Road, the Krubola/Kabala and Masiaka/Makeni Road. According to the handing over notes, work was ongoing on the Masiaka/Bo, Bo/Kenema Road, Kenema/Koidu, Makeni/Matotoka, Matotoka/Koidu, Rogbere Junction/Pamalap Road, and funding had been secured for Tokeh/Lumley Road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, former President Ahmed Tejan Kabba also stated that the National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA] had already allocated funds for the construction of a modern international market at Koidu, which was to facilitate international trade between and amongst Sierra Leoneans and our immediate neighbouring countries. I want to remind Members of Parliament that this Speech was neither debunked nor rejected by Dr Ernest Bai Koroma [*Applause by the SLPP Bench*].

Having laid that premise, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my discussion with transportation. In this Speech, His Excellency Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio talked about the high cost of roads roads financed by the Government of Sierra

Leone. For example, the 4.5 Kilometer Wilkinson Road cost **\$20.5mln**, which makes it the most expensive road in the World. Analytically, every Kilometer cost **\$4.5mln**. May I also remind Members of Parliament that the Government of Sierra Leone is indebted to Gento Group of Company about **Le 71bln** and certified payment certificate was submitted to the Government of Sierra Leone under the former government since 2016. I also want to state here that in two years, late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba worked on the Waterloo/Tokeh Peninsula Road and completed it. In ten years, the APC led Government could not complete the Lumley/Tokeh Road. Initially, that road was valued at **\$10mln**, but when the APC came to power in 2007, the road was revaluated and **10mln** became **\$100mln**. As we speak, we have **\$33mln** of Certified Interim Payment Certificate submitted by CSC, which is yet to be paid by the then government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have heard a lot about the risk and risk calculation in terms of debts. Debts are calculated based on the country's revenue performance. In other words, countries usually borrow from the IMF or the World Bank and their debts are calculated based on revenue to income ratios. My colleague on the other side cited an IMF document to have stated that the risk of Sierra Leone is moderate. I want to remind him that there are cadres of risks when loan are granted. We have performing loans and sub-standard loans. Sub-standard loans are loans that are provided according to risks. And risks rating provisions are under Category 'A;' i.e., moderate risks. We also have rightful and write off. In this case, the President's opening statement in his Speech delivered in this House on the 10th May, 2018 said that he inherited a country whose Economy is the worse since Independence. This is not a misplacement of words. When I looked at the handing over note of the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma in relation to the debt situation of the country, he could not, after ten years, tell us specifically what the debt situation of the country is. But His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, in less than six weeks, was able to tell us that our external debt stands as **\$2bln** and **Le4.9tln** domestic debt. This is a clear indication to show that when he took over power, he did due diligence because he exactly know what the Office of the President means and how to manage its affairs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at the Finance Act of 2017, which makes provision for the establishment of the Treasury Single Account [TSA]. This was enacted by the APC led Government. When President Julius Maada Bio came to power, he realised that there were various bank accounts owned by EPA, NMA or other government agencies in commercial banks across the country. This means that the TSA was never properly monitored by the APC led Government. It could also mean they were not serious about it. It was just a lip service to this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, President Julius Maada Bio has been monitoring the operations of the TSA effectively and within six weeks, over **Le300bln** was collected as revenue. My colleagues on the other side said that the APC collected **Le279bln**, which is less than the **Le 300bln** under President Julius Maada Bio in six weeks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba was very magnanimous in building good international relationships with our international partners and donors. He mentioned BADEA, IDB, ADB, and EU as part of our financier for road construction. In the bogus handing over notes of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, we realised that the Beach Road, which was funded by the EU was not referenced in the handing over notes. Again, he never recognised the role of the Exim Bank for financing the construction of Regent/Grafton Road and also the Wilberforce Road. This shows that the APC led Government was only playing politics with the people of Sierra Leone and were not sincere about development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about 'strengthening the financial sector.' The financial sector is in deplorable condition. I can say with authority that no bank in this country can issue a performance bond of any of the contract issued by the APC because the contract values were in excess of **\$100mln**. For example, the Makeni/Kamakwe and Kabala Road contract awarded to the CSE was valued at **\$100mln**. It is stated in the contract that **70%** of the payment should be done in foreign currency. If you are to issue a performance bond of **70%**, but issue **30%** performance bond, no bank in this country has the capacity to issue that bond. This means that the challenges in foreign currency and the flight of a foreign currency

exchange was facilitated by the APC led Government. This is because these companies will have to rely on banks in other countries that have the capacity to issue such performance bonds. And when the performance bonds are issued, the government or the awarder of the contract is under obligation to make that payment to the bank that issued the performance bond.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to encourage the new Minister of Finance to immediately put measure in place. In The Gambia, for instance, when Government awards a contract to a contractor, they calculate **5%** of the total value that hit the balance sheet or the issuing bank, will make provision for adequate foreign currency flow in the country. This will also help strengthen the financial institutions in that country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in his handing over Speech, Dr Ernest Koroma stated that his government has succeeded in providing additional safe drinking water to 1.3 million Sierra Leoneans. I want to state here that in my constituency, which covers Juba, Regent Road and main Lumley do not have access to pipe borne water. In fact, **86%** of the people in the urban areas cannot access pipe borne water. I am still wondering how the creation of the Ministry of Water Resources in the last five years affected the lives of the people of this country. But under the 'New Direction,' a competent Sierra Leonean, Dr Bonapha Jonathan Tengbeh, under the guidance of His Excellency the President, has been appointed to manage that Ministry. We are confident that the water situation will improve tremendously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to address the Energy sector. We have heard a lot about electricity and we should not be oblivious of the fact that the government of Sierra Leone is indebted to Independent Power Providers [IPP], bundle out unworlly of the National Power Authority [NPA]. Today, we owed approximately **Le500bln** to the IDP. The APC led Government was only paying **50%** to Addax and other IDP providers, and they carry forward the **50%** and they have been carry forwarding the **50%** until the amount reached **500bln** that is what we are inheriting today. But under the 'New Direction,' the Minister of Finance has just

signed the Solar Energy Project at a reasonable cost. This is going to benefit the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I take my seat, I want to say a word or two about the 'Ministerial Orders.' I want to draw the attention of Honourable Members on the other side of this House to Section 53, Sub-section 2 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991. It states that a Minister has an Executive Authority and can act on behalf of Parliament. On that note, Mr Speaker, I rest my case. I thank you very much for your attention.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. I extend the same compliments to Honourable Members who had preceded him. I just want to make a brief intervention and against the backdrop of eminent visits from a host of international development partners, which visits are on the horizon in the coming weeks. We should note that the previous government established the TSA, equally so, we should acknowledge that the new government has been responsible for the implementation of the TSA. I say this in order to clarify the issue because we should all know that the international partners whose visits are on the horizon are deeply interested in this particular matter. So, I state it now for the record, that the previous government established the TSA. It is my pleasure to also observe that the implementation of the TSA has been undertaken vigorously by the present government..

Honourable Members, indeed we now confirm that there are several visitors coming, therefore I implore you when you make your contributions, try to be as factual as possible in the interest of national development and national cohesion.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 2.45 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 29th May, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.]