



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION - FOURTH MEETING

TUESDAY, 30TH APRIL, 2019

SESSION – 2018/2019



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMETARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: II

NUMBER: 60

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 30th April, 2019.

CONTENTS

I. PRAYERS

II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 30TH APRIL, 2019

III. LAYING OF PAPERS

[A] THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

[i] GENERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT JOINT COMMISSION FOR COOPERATION

[ii] AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ON MILITARY-TECHNICAL COOPERATION

[B] THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND SIERRA TROPICAL LTD RELATING TO BO DISTRICT AGRO-PROCESSING FACILITY COOPERATION

IV. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. AMADU KANU

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE THIRTY-FOURTH REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 30th April, 2019.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 10:55 a.m. at Sierra Leone Bank Complex, Kingtom]

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to do a short Amendment on the Order Paper. Item V, which is the Motion of the Committee on Appointments will now be item IV and item IV becomes item V. We also have item IV [i] and [ii] and there is a third sub-item which has to do with the Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Sierra Tropical Ltd, relating to Bo District Agro Processing Facility Project. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, under item IV, which has to do with the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, the seconder is now Honourable Amadu Kanu, instead of Honourable Hassan A. Sesay. Honourable Hassan A. Sesay is presently the Acting Leader of the Opposition and he would be rounding up the debate.

THE SPEAKER: I hope there is no dissenting view. I want to recognise and pay my respect to the Honourable Hassan A. Sesay for his momentary acting position. I hope you will continue to extend the usual courtesies to Mr Speaker.

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 16TH APRIL, 2019

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of the Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 16th April, 2019. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4. We will start with Page 5. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Honourable Members, I have a correction to make on Page 8, under 'Laying Out Ceremony. 'It should be corrected as taking place on Tuesday, 30th April, in place of Monday the 29th April. With that correction, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceeding for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 16th April, 2019 as amended?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 16th April, 2019 has been adopted as Amended]

III. PAPERS LAID

[A] THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

DR ALIE S. KABBA [*Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following agreements:

[i] General Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the Establishment of Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation; and

[ii] Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on Military-Technical Cooperation [*Applause*].

[B] THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MR JOSEPH J. NDANEMA [*Minister of Agriculture and Forestry*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following agreements:

Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Tropical Ltd Relating to Bo District Agro-Processing Facility Cooperation [*Applause*].

MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. AMADU KANU

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the Thirty-Fourth Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service:

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is responsible for vetting presidential nominees so as to select the most

fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices met on Wednesday, 24th April, 2019 and interviewed five presidential nominees for appointment to the following positions:

- [i] Deputy Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC]
- [ii] Member, Sierra Leone Council for Postgraduate Colleges of Health Specialties.
- [iii] Member, Board of Director, Produce Monitoring Board
- [iv] Two Members, Local Government Finance Committee

2. Procedure

The Committee conducted the hearings within the ambit of its established criteria to elicit facts as to whether the nominees were fit and qualified for their proposed appointments. The deliberations of the Committee were guided by the principle of objectivity to the extent that beside perusing the specified documents provided by the nominees, the Committee went further to request for public input into the vetting process by furnishing the Committee with information of relevance to the suitability of the nominees or otherwise for their proposed appointments.

The Committee ensured that the nominees were cleared of any criminal records by the Criminal Investigation Department [CID] and that they have the relevant qualifications and necessary backup experience to match such important offices of state. Probing questions put to the nominees covered wide ranging issues pertaining to their track records in other pertinent work situations, their declared assets and liabilities, fulfilment of their tax obligations and their visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure.

3. Thirty-Eighth Sitting of the Committee on Wednesday, 24th April, 2019

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominees were interviewed on oath:

[i] Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie, Proposed Deputy Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission Sierra Leone.

Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie is currently the Deputy Director, Investigation Department, Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission. Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie had initially served in the Sierra Leone Police Force from 1990 to 2002 before retiring as Deputy

Head, Inspectorate and Compliance Division. He joined the Anti-Corruption Commission in 2003 as Investigation Officer. He served in different capacities within the institution ranging from Investigation Officer, Senior Investigation Officer, Manager- Exhibit, and Rapid Response Team and has accumulated a wealth of Anti-Corruption work experience in the past fifteen years.

Reacting to probing questions, Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie said that he was grateful to His Excellency, the President, for the confidence reposed in him. He viewed his nomination as a challenging call to serve fatherland in a new capacity. He assured the Committee that he would adhere to the provisions of the Anti-Corruption Commission Act of 2008 as Amended. **"I have served for a long time at the Anti-Corruption Commission and has accumulated a wealth of experience which has adequately prepared me for success of my new assignment,"** he said.

Commenting on further concerns of the Committee, Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie said: **"I am not a member of any political party and I will ensure that I am free from any political influence in the course of discharging my duties. Together with my Commissioner and the entire team, I will ensure that we minimize corruption drastically. If we can eradicate Ebola, I believe we can also eradicate corruption. I will be serving my country and not politicians or any political party. I believe that I am well qualified and capable for the job. I promise to ensure that we will achieve those objectives for which the Anti-Corruption Commission was established."**

[ii] Mr David Sanu Kai Rogers, Proposed Member, Sierra Leone Council for Postgraduate Colleges of Health Specialities.

Mr David Kai Rogers is a retired senior Deputy Registrar, Milton Margai College of Education and Technology. He has thirty-seven years of work experience in Development, Coordination, and Elections Management.

Responding to the Committee's inquiries, Mr David Kai Rogers said: **"After graduating from college, I joined the Ministry of Education and served for over 27 years. After the Ministry of Education, I went to the National Electoral Commission**

and served as Executive Secretary for four years before retirement. But I was recalled from retirement to join the staff at the Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, where I served as Senior Deputy Registrar. When I thought that I have finally retired, here I am again with another call to join the Ministry of Health. If I obtain the blessings of approval of this Honourable House, I will work collaboratively with my colleague members of Council to formulate policies that will encourage our health specialists to stay put and serve their own country. I will draw on my accumulated experience for the success of the Council.

[iii] Mr Christian Andrew Leigh, Proposed Member, Board of Director, Produce Monitoring Board.

Mr Christian Leigh served in the Sierra Leone Police Force as a constable from 1969 to 1983. He is now self-employed and a popular businessman.

Reacting to the Committee's inquiries, Mr Christian Leigh opined that his nomination by His Excellency the President was prudent and appropriate. **"I have the capacity to perform as a Board member because I have the requisite qualifications and the backup experience. I will work collaboratively with my colleague Board members to ensure that we actualise the President's dream for this country under his New Direction,"** he said.

[iv] Mr Ernest Daniel Max Lavalie, Proposed Member, Local Government Finance Committee.

Mr Ernest Daniel Max Lavalie is a Lecturer, Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology from 2012 to date. He once served as Registrar, National Election Commission in 2007.

Reacting to Members' inquiries, Mr Ernest Daniel Max Lavalie said that if he is approved by Honourable Members, he would perform his duties as provided in the Act. **"I will ensure prudent management of state resources and enforce transparency and accountability in the Local Government Council I am assigned to,"** he said.

Mr Samuka Kamara, Mr Kamara, proposed Member, Local Government Finance Committee.

Mr Kamara has a wealth of Non-Governmental Organisation [NGO] work experience, particularly in the Kailahun District. He is currently the District Coordinator Inter-Religious Council. He had previously served as a councillor in the Kailahun District Council as Development Planning Committee Chairman and member of the Budget and Finance Committee. In his interview, Mr Kamara thanked His Excellency the President for his nomination to serve as a member of Local Government Finance Committee. Having been a banker and Accountant in the Kailahun Community Development Project, he believed he was suitable for the job. **"I believe I can adequately deliver I have served for the council for two terms and I was a member of the budget Committee, I was also Chairman for the Development and Planning Committee. At that time, there were no development and planning officers, I was like doing everything to help develop the council. I will do my very best"** he said.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following nominees to be fit and qualified for their proposed appointments and they are recommended to the House for approval:

[i] Mr Augustine Foday Ngobie, proposed Deputy Commissioner, Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC];

[ii] Mr David Kai Rogers, proposed Member, Sierra Leone Council for Post-Graduate Colleges of Health Specialities;

[iii] Mr Christian Leigh, proposed Member, Board of Directors, Produce Monitoring Board;

[iv] Mr Earnest Daniel Max Lavalie, proposed Member, Local Government Finance Committee; and

[v] Mr Samuka Kamara, proposed Member, Local Government Finance Committee.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 34th report portrays the unanimous decision of the committee. I therefore move that the 34th report of the first session of the

committee on appointment and the public service be adopted by the House and that the recommendation contained therein be approved.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. AMADU KANU: I so second, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me take this opportunity, before the debates start, to inform the House that this is the last day of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament. I would like to adjourn the House at 12:00 noon, so that we can give ourselves time to engage in other activities.

[Question Proposed]

HON. AMADU KANU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking the Speaker of this House for giving me this opportunity. I hope to be catching your eye regularly in the subsequent sittings.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in one of my previous submissions in this House, I did say, among other things, that issues related to qualifications and suitability of nominees to positions of trust must not be a subject matter of a debate because of the composition of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service. We have a barrage of experienced, seasoned and knowledgeable men and women on that Committee. We have a very young and dynamic legal luminary, Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah as a Member of that Committee. We also have the Honourable Dr Kandeh K. Yumkella, Honourable Sidie M. Tunis [Chairman of the Committee], etc. This is manifestation that this Committee must have done due diligence to the interview process. In other words, Members of the Committee must have done thorough work, putting aside all personal interests. That is why I will not want to be labour the approval of the nominees seated before us this morning because as a Member of the Committee myself, I must attest to the undeniable fact that all the nominees seated here are suitably qualified for the positions they have been nominated to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not want to talk about individuals at all. I would however like to comment on the appointment of the proposed Deputy Commissioner of

Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], Mr Augustine Ngobie. I have known this man for decades now and I can state here that he is a sober minded man. In fact, at Committee level, I described him as one of the people I refer to as 'the go getters.' In other words, if you delegate responsibilities to him, he will go there and do exactly what is expected of him. Therefore, I have no doubt that if he is approved, Mr Augustine Ngobie is going to do exactly what is expected of him.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to ask my colleagues to support and approve all these nominees. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Amadu Kanu for his very wise words of advice. I would now recognise only one more speaker, preferably somebody who is not a Member of the Committee on Appointments.

HON. VANDY C. KEIKURA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for catching your eye. I am one of the happiest men this morning. We have heard the commendations made by the right Honourable Member on the other side. He lavished praises on an individual I would also like to talk about; i.e., the proposed Anti-Corruption Deputy Commissioner. I want to allay the fears of my colleague, Honourable Mohamed Bangura that of course everybody knows that I am a member of the Sierra Leones Peoples Party [SLPP]. We never knew that Mr Ngobie is an SLPP. The only thing I knew about him was his diligence and dedication to work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I came to know this gentleman five months before the 2018 general elections. Some of you on the other side were thinking that I was receiving salary and I did not resign one year before the elections. Somebody who was teaching at the Ahmadiyya Primary School in Kambia District was using my name and salaries were paid to his account at Rokel Commercial Bank in Port Loko. He called himself Keikura Vandy. That matter was reported to the ACC office in Bo, and it was also reported to the Criminal Investigation Division [CID] Headquarters. The investigation was done very fast the criminal was reprimanded.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of my opponents went to the ACC office and reported that this was the man who was still receiving salary. I was invited to the ACC and that was the time I met Mr Ngobie. I wanted to speak the Mende language to Mr Ngobie because of his surname. I asked him if he was a Mende man. He said: **"That is not what we are here for, either you speak Krio language or you speak the English language. We are not here on tribal matters."** I want to tell you how decent this gentleman is. I sat there and gave him the evidences and he said: **"Mr Vandy, you have no problem. I have seen all the salary returns and I have seen the correspondences between the Accountant-General's Department and the Managing Director of the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank for disclosure of the account holder of that criminal. I have seen all these documents and you can go."** I still wanted to engage him by speaking Mende, but he said: **"I have told you not to speak Mende. I am a Sierra Leonean and let us speak Krio."** I decided to bring all these explanations to allay the fears of Honourable Mohamed Bangura. Well, if Honourable Mohamed Bangura knows that he has no problem with the fibre optic, then you are safe, if you are involved, no matter how you lavish praises on Mr Francis Ben Keifala or Mr Ngobie, that matter will be pursued *[Laughter]*.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to tell this Honourable House who is Mr Ngobie.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I think having heard what my colleagues have said about the nominees, I cannot bore this House with praises. We know that they are fine gentlemen and ladies. The President thought these are good nominees and we must give them the chance to perform because we believe they are Sierra Leoneans and they deserve to be given the opportunity to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have interacted with all these nominees before, particularly Mr Ngobie. Like I said, I will not repeat what has already been said about

the nominees. I will only assure them that we will definitely approve them. I was part of the Committee that interviewed them and I know they are capable to serve in the various capacities they have nominated to serve. We hope that when they go to serve, they will serve Sierra Leone. I want to remind them that this is the only country we have and Sierra Leone does not belong to just a set of people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to swiftly respond to my colleague on the other side, who mentioned the name of the Honourable Member. In the first place, he dishonoured him when he called him Mohamed Bangura. He is Honourable Mohamed Bangura for your edification. Please learn to do the Honourable thing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish the nominees well and hope that they will deliver. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Rt Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition. I now call on the Leader of Government Business for his contribution.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot has been said about the nominees. I believe these are highly qualified presidential nominees. Mr Speaker, judging from Mr Ngobie's CV and what some of us know about him is that he is a highly qualified gentleman with a very high integrity. The appointment of Mr Ngobie is part of the President's determination to fight corruption in Sierra Leone. As a Government, we will continue to strengthen the ACC, either by nominating qualified people or amending laws that will ensure that corruption becomes very costly in Sierra Leone.

Without saying much, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on this Honourable House to approve all of these nominees. I thank you.

[Question Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee of Appointments and the Public Service has been approved]

THE SPEAKER: It is now my privilege to say a few words of commendation and to draw the attention of the nominees, who have just been approved by the House, to the fact that they enjoy the confidence not only of His Excellency the President who nominated them, but also of this Honourable House. It is now left with them to live up

to the very high expectations of both His Excellency the President and this noble House. I have no doubt from what have been said about them that they truly live up to expectations. I congratulate them on behalf of the House and wish them well in their assignments. Congratulations and we hope you are going to perform to the best of your ability and live up to the expectations of the Executive, the Legislature and the public. I thank you. You may now take leave of us.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [*Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, and today being the last day in this Session, I want to add one more item on the Order Paper, which is 'Laying of Papers.'

[i] Report of the First Ordinary Session of the Fifth Pan-African Parliament, held in Kigali, Rwanda from the 18th October, to the 3rd November, 2018, under the African Union Theme 'Wining the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation.'

[ii] Report of the Sitting of the Permanent Committees of the Pan-African Parliament, Jointly held in Midrand, South Africa and in Tunis, Tunisia from 27th February, to 9th March, 2019 Under the African Union 2019 Theme 'Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa towards durable solutions to First Displacement.' These Papers would be laid by the Rt Honourable Deputy Speaker of the House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Leader of Government Business has just moved the Motion. Any seconder?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I so second.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[The Motion as announced by Leader of Government Business has been carried]

PAPERS LAID

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS [*Deputy Speaker*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in line with practice and procedure of this House relating to International Parliaments to which Sierra Leone is a part, I hereby Table before this Honourable House the following reports:

[i] Report of the First Ordinary Session of the Fifth Pan-African Parliament, held in Kigali, Rwanda from the 18th October, to the 3rd November, 2018, under the African Union Theme 'Wining the Fight Against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation.'

[ii] Report of the Sitting of the Permanent Committees of the Pan-African Parliament, Jointly held in Midrand, South Africa and in Tunis, Tunisia from 27th February, to 9th March, 2019 Under the African Union 2019 Theme 'Year of Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons in Africa towards durable solutions to First Displacement.'

These Papers would be laid by the Rt Honourable Deputy Speaker of the House.

IV. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

DR ALIE S. KABBA [*Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 30th April, 2019:

[i] General Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the establishment of Permanent Joint Commission for Cooperation; and

[ii] Agreements between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone on Military Technical Cooperation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the General Cooperation Agreement with Ghana, let me simply say that Ghana and Sierra Leone share common interests as Members of ECOWAS, the African Union [AU] and the United Nations [UN], consistent with the vision of His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio and the cooperatives of the 'New Direction.' This Joint Commission will go a long way to accelerate the integration process in West Africa and indeed in Africa. His Excellency the President signed the Continental Free Trade Agreement on the 2nd July, 2018 in Mauritania. To emphasise our commitment to the integration of Africa, we believe that intra Africa trade and investments will help to accelerate development for both

countries. Sierra Leone and Ghana stand to benefit from this particular Permanent Joint Commission for cooperation. Within the framework of this cooperation, we hope that Sierra Leone will learn from the experience of Ghana and also Ghana will share their own experiences with us as well as we share ours with them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the Russian Military Technical Agreement, this Agreement will enable Sierra Leone and Russia to engage in military cooperation through the sale and purchase of military equipment. The exchange of relevant military technical intellectual property rights, the placement of military specialists in each country and the training of military personnel in both countries. Mr Speaker, when I was in Russia from 27th - 31st January, 2019 on official visit, we made it very clear that Sierra Leone and Russia will benefit a lot from this particular Agreement. I see great opportunity for Sierra Leone to deepen the relation based on the win-win cooperation. I know that the benefit of this particular Russia Military Technical Agreement will help to strengthen our military. Indeed, it will help us to protect the land that we love Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 30th April 2019:

[A] General cooperation agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the establishment of permanent joint commission for Cooperation

[B] Agreement between the Government of the Russian federation and the Government of the republic of Sierra Leone on Military-Technical Cooperation

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. Honourable Members, I have been advised that this is not a controversial Agreement. In fact, there are two Agreements and none is controversial. Therefore, I will invite the two Leaders to round up the debate.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agreements in front of us are not controversial and in fact bringing a document on the cooperation between Sierra Leone and Ghana is just reinforcing our relationship which has already been in existence for some time now. Our relationship with Ghana date as far back as in the 60s and 70s. When we were going to school, we used to have teachers from Ghana to Sierra Leone. The Ghanaians have been very cooperative. In terms of our laws, we got the common background from the colonialists. So, the bond between Ghana and Sierra Leone is nothing new.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agreement will show how valuable this relationship has been and what this President is doing to reaffirm that we are still committed to cooperate with Ghana and to improve our relationship. Mr Speaker, if you look at Ghana, the Minister spoke about cross border trade, cross border cooperation and cross country relationship, which are going to help not only in our diplomatic relations, but improving our Gross Domestic Product [GDP] when we improve trade relation with countries within the sub-region. I think that is the spirit of the ECOWAS Agreement and we are aware that economic integration is meant to improve African countries. In terms of trade relation, the only way African can grow is when we partner with other countries. Of course, if you have been to Ghana, there is very little that you will not agree with based on what the Minister has just told us. So, this is why we said this is not controversial at all. To me, this is like a Pan-African relationship between African countries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that this is not going to stop here at all. What we are thinking about is to get a super highway, linking all African countries, so that trade will be better coordinated between African countries. If we have a link, there are lots we can achieve. I am am sure what we are doing now is very relevant and we have to work on it, so as to ensure that we benefit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to the Russian Agreement. Well, the relationship between Sierra Leone and Russian dates as far back as the birth of the USSR, when they used to send medical practitioners and other professionals to Sierra

Leone. Again, the relationship between Sierra Leone and Russia is not new at all. They assisted us in the area of fishing by setting up our fishing school with Zara fisheries. Therefore, this is not strange, but revisiting all of these will help to strengthen our relationship. We have not lost sight of where we came from and that is why we said these Agreements are non-controversial.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the President have given primacy to Russia and Ghana, and this is something we will welcome in our diplomatic circles. I hope we will continue to strengthen these ties. Like I said, this is not only for countries in West Africa, but countries beyond the West African borders to East, South, and Central African. Therefore, there must be an interconnection between and among African states, which will benefit the African Economy and African countries. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker for what we have in front of us today.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Acting Leader of the Opposition. I will now call on the Leader of Government Business to wind up the debate.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to first of all thank the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs for these Agreements. He has been doing extremely well for the people of Sierra Leone. These particular Agreements are very crucial for the development of this country. The Agreement regarding Ghana and Sierra Leone is very good. We have a very close relationship with the Republic of Ghana, but this Agreement will go further to cement that relationship. If Honourable Members have gone through this Agreement, it is going to cover economic trade and investment, energy, mineral resources, agriculture, education, science and technology, security and military cooperation, Foreign Affairs, legal and judicial matters. What this Agreement is saying is that Ghana and Sierra Leone are going to form a joint cooperation that will be led by a Minister of State with expert from both countries for the development of the two countries. I believe Sierra Leone, being a country that is suffering even as we are seated here, this particular Agreement will go a long way to help improve trade relationship with Ghana.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes our colleagues on the other side have to think. Russian and Sierra Leone have such a very close tie, but we begin to ask ourselves what actually went wrong? Why did they leave Sierra Leone? I want to thank the Minister of Foreign Affairs for reviving the lost relationship with Russia. I believe that with the exchange of military personnel training and support to our military, Sierra Leone may just end up being one of the strongest countries in terms of military soft wear and support programmes.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I call on my colleagues to please approve these two Agreements. These Agreements are in the interest of the country and Sierra Leone stand to benefit a lot. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Leader of Government Business. Let me just draw your attention to the fact that no real issue has been raised that invite a respond from the Honourable Minister. However, I would like to draw your attention to one observation. I am sure the Honourable Minister may also be aware that there was in existence, in the past, a Joint Commission between Sierra Leone and Nigeria under which this country benefited a great deal. For quite some time that Joint Commission appears to be completely dormant. We wonder whether he has any plans to revitalised that Commission because as a Member of the delegation that accompanied His Excellency the President to Abuja some months ago, this issue was raised and I was just wondering what the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation has done towards that end, i.e. revitalising and reviving the Joint Commission between Sierra Leone and Nigeria.

DR ALIE S. KABBA: Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament, I want to thank the Honourable Speaker for reminding us about a visit we made together immediately after the inauguration of His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. We went to Abuja together and I went with my counterpart, a Foreign Minister, who has been very kind and supportive. Mr Speaker, let me state here that since we came back from Abuja, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation, through our Economic and Technical Cooperation Division, worked on the draft framework for the

Joint Permanent Commission between Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Ghana. It covers a broad range of areas and our goal was to revive the moribund Agreements that have been in place that you are alluded to. As we speak, the only reason why we have not brought it here yet is because we were waiting for the conclusion of the Nigerian elections. Therefore, we are going to make sure that the two Ministries meet in Freetown or in Abuja. We are waiting for the date from Nigeria, so that we can start the draft. I am very confident that within the next few months, we will come back to this Parliament to ratify this Agreement after Cabinet approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me also talk about the Cooperation with the Federal Republic of Nigeria that the Speaker spoke about. Nigeria and Sierra Leone enjoy a long history and we cooperated well in multi-national arenas; i.e., the ECOWAS, the African Union, the United Nations, the SENCAD and many other organisations. The reason is because we believe that Nigeria has always been with us and we have also seen Nigeria as our big brother. Let me also state here that under this current administration in Abuja, President Buhari has also underscored the importance of this relationship and that is why President Julius Maada Bio made it very clear that we should prioritised the bilateral relationship with the Federal Republic of Nigeria. So, we will convene a meeting in Freetown or Abuja very soon and proceed to the draft framework that we have completed.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday 30th April, 2019:

[A] General cooperation agreement between the Government of the Republic of Ghana and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the establishment of permanent joint commission for Cooperation

[B] Agreement between the Government of the Russian federation and the Government of the republic of Sierra Leone on Military-Technical Cooperation

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Minister for the explanation he has offered the House with regard to the revival of the moribund Permanent Joint Commission between Sierra Leone and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Government Motion by the Minister of Foreign Affairs has been ratified]

[B], THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

MR. JOSEPH NDANEMA *[The Minister of Agriculture and Forestry]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which was laid on the Table of this Honourable House on Tuesday, 30th April, 2019:

Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Tropical Limited relating to Bo District Agro-Processing Facility Project

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the tenth day of May, 2018, His Excellency the President, in his maiden speech at the State Opening of Parliament, noted the urgent need to diversify the Economy using Agriculture as an engine for socio-economic growth. In addition to a number of other interventions to rejuvenate the Agriculture Sector, I am pleased and honoured today to lay before this noble House of Parliament for ratification, an Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Tropical Limited relating to the establishment and operations of an Agro-Processing Facility, dealing with the cultivation, processing and export of fresh and/or processed pineapples in Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo District, in the Southern part of the Republic of Sierra Leone. This project shall include a fruit farm of pineapples and an Agro-processing Facility where fruits grown in Sierra Leone, particularly pineapples, with the hope of moving into mangoes where vast and other tropical fruits will be processed and sold in the local markets and be exported.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the investment shall include the list of a minimum of 4,335 hectares of land to house both the farms and other support infrastructure which in any case, includes a modern Agro-Processing Facility. The people of Lugbu Chiefdom

and its environs are expected to be the key beneficiaries, the entire country and its people are also expected to benefit from the revenue and other taxes in diverse ways. The operations of Sierra Tropical Ltd shall, in a huge way, help address the challenge[s] of unemployment and address the challenges of rural/urban migration. It shall provide employment opportunities to locals as well as other residents anywhere qualified in this country. Sierra Topical Ltd currently employs about 450 local staff this figure is expected to approximately rise from 1,000 to 1,500 by mid-2019 and between 1,500 to 2,000 before 2020 if this document is ratified by this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in addition to boost economic activities within the locality, the payment of carefully negotiated lease rent to Land Owning Families will also increase the financial standing of the people in that area. A date, lease rents have been paid to entitled land owners, in addition to payment of crop compensation to affected farmers. Sierra Topical Ltd, Total and NP are already in advanced negotiation to establish filling station, mini-mart and fuel supply and people who will service not only the Company, but the Community and the entire environment. Additionally, as part of Sierra Tropical Ltd commitment to its corporate social responsibility, it has developed and approved a Community Action Development Plan with a budget of **\$300,000**. Sierra Tropical Ltd is expected to contribute to revenue generation even at its very early beginning. It has already honoured its entire tax obligations with the State. This includes taxes on the importation of Agricultural inputs which in actual case must enjoy tax exemptions pursuant to the Income Tax Act of 2000.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, permit me to lay in this Well, this Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Tropical Limited relating to the establishment and operations of an Agro-Processing Facility dealing with the cultivation, and exportation of fresh and processed pineapples in Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo District.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which was laid on the Table of this Honourable House on Tuesday, 30th April, 2019:

Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Sierra Tropical Limited relating to Bo District Agro-Processing Facility Project

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Minister kept hacking on the laying of the paper which had actually begun. What we are now in the process of doing is ratifying the Agreement. We are going to follow a procedure similar to the one we adopted for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. I will limit the discussion to just two contributors to the debate before we wind up, one from each side of the aisle. I will start by recognising the Honourable Member, in whose constituency this particular project is located. I am sure he has got a lot to inform us, but please recognise that time is very limited and I would not want to tell you exactly what time you are limited to.

HON. ALIMAMY O. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to seize this opportunity to express my joy and happiness for the request for this investment project. The Sierra Tropical Limited is a pilot investment I would say, because it is the first in Africa outside Malaysia and other countries, where this project is operating, and the response from my people, the community has been so positive that even by now we are thinking that the laying of this document for debate has been long overdue. Unlike other investments projects that export our raw materials, the Sierra Tropical Investment Company Limited will not only cultivate and process the raw materials, it also exports, thereby bringing foreign exchange to the country. Moreover, they will provide employment opportunities for the indigenes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Minister has just explained the strategy in presenting their man-power plan. He said 450 workers would be employed at the start of the project and by the end of 2028, over 3,000 workers will be needed to cover not only Lugbu Chiefdom, but the environs and entire country. This is an investment that started with few hiccups, but with my timely interventions, I was able to prevail on the land owning families and the Chiefdom to understand the benefit of such project in the community. In fact, there will be a shift from the imperial to the metric system. There was a protracted agreement over acreage and hectare. Fortunately, however, we have been able to get them to understand and the rates

assigned to these hectares have been paid. As I speak, equipment and other facilities to start the implementation of this investment are just awaiting your approval. So, I want to appeal to colleagues Honourable Members, to give this project the support it needs. I am sure this investment is coming directly from the Japanese and the success and expansion will depend on this ratification stage.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would not want to labour the point, but to appeal to our colleagues to kindly ratify this document. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I would want to recognise a Member of the Select Committee on Agriculture on the other side.

HON. AARON A. KOROMA: Thank very much sir. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleagues who has just spoken on this debate. I also want to commend the Minister for bringing this Agreement for ratification. I must say that this Agreement is non-controversial. As mentioned by the Minister, this project has started in 2016. It has been in operation, but because Government failed to do what it was supposed to do, that is why we are here today. There are enormous benefits we will get if this Agreement is ratified. We all know that there are always tax holidays or tax incentives, which the Ministry of Finance offers to companies in the Finance Act. However, for companies to access these Tax Wavers or Tax Concessions, it is only companies whose Memorandum of Understanding that has been ratified can benefit from such Tax Wavers. I am sure that is why the Minister is here, so that the Minister can secure the concessional guarantee for the company.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring another issue which I would like the Minister to take into consideration. We have the Sahr Malen issue which is a troubling issue in this country. I think this company should create buffer zones to ensure that it does not take the lands which the people are supposed to use for farming. That is another very important issue which I will be expecting the Minister to take into consideration. On behalf of the Committee on Agriculture, I ask that this Honourable House approves this Agreement. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think what we have in front of us is an Agreement that is not controversial, and it will definitely lead to an improvement in our Gross Domestic Products. In fact, this project will ensure that the products are sold in Sierra Leone. The producers will be based in Sierra Leone. They call themselves Tropical and they have produced a very popular juice, the 'Doll Product,' which is a recognised brand globally. If we have a company with international reputation in Sierra Leone, definitely we will embrace it with our strength.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to call the attention of this big investment companies to do the needful. This is because we have had SOCFIN and Sahr Malen and we hope that all the issues that usually bring friction between the people of Sahr Malen and SOCFIN will be resolved. I am saying this because for every experience we get, we learn something from it. Since we are about to receive another big investment company into this country, we want to make sure that those who are responsible should dot the 'Is' and cross the 'Ts,' so that what we have been experiencing will not happen again. A colleague Honourable Member was humiliated in the process. We do not want such to happen again. That besides, I want to remind the Minister that **\$300,000** for Cooperate Social Responsibility is good, but with the passing of time, that amount count not be enough for a whole community. Therefore, we must remember that those whose lands were taken must be compensated. Mr Speaker, as much as we want the profit in the form of taxes, we should not also lose sight of the fact that we want to protect our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me however take this opportunity to congratulate the Rt Honourable Speaker for being recognised for his valuable service to this country over the years [*Applause*]. I met the Right Honourable Speaker in 1982, when he came from the Commonwealth to contest elections in this country. I was a student at Fourah Bay College and he came to Fourah Bay College. He was one of the people we admired greatly by then. We admired him at the Commonwealth and coming to serve in local politics meant a whole lot to us. He was the Minister of Agriculture when he contested

as the Member of Parliament. Those were the days when Members of Parliament were also Ministers. He served as Minister of Agriculture and he later went to serve as the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS in the 80s. Since then, he has been in the national politics of this country until now that he has become the Speaker of this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I met Dr Abass Chernor Bundu in 1982. Honourable Members, sitting in front of him today as a Member of Parliament and him being the Speaker of this House tells a lot. That is why I will honourably ask this Honourable House to give a standing ovation to the Speaker of this House for his recognition *[Applause]*. We should give a standing ovation for his diligent service to this country. Thank you very much, Honourable Members.

Mr Speaker, on behalf of our party, the APC and the entire Parliament, I want to take this singular opportunity to congratulate you. I thank you very much *[Standing Ovation Observed]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for extending that standing ovation on his behalf and on behalf of his colleagues.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: I want to start by congratulating the Honourable Minister of Agriculture for this Project. I believe this is a very good project and if we can have couple of such projects across the country, I believe it will go a long way to help with the employment of our youth. In other words, it will help to truncate the unemployment rate in the country. The unemployment rate in the country is very high at the moment, but I believe such projects will definitely help to solve such problems.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask the Honourable Minister to ensure that this particular Project is not clouded by expertise staff. We have highly qualified people in this country and we have a University that is producing students who are Agriculturists every year. They are experts in their own rights. I therefore call on the Minister to ensure that we do not have a contingent of expertise staff from abroad in the guise of Agricultural Specialists. We have them here. With that, I want to thank

Honourable Members who contributed to this Motion and to ask them to please approve this Project. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Leader of Government Business for his contribution.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Government Motion by the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry has been ratified]

THE SPEAKER: We have come to the end of our proceedings for today. I want to draw the attention of the House that today is the last day of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament. His Excellency the President, in accordance with the provisions of Section 84 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991, has signed a proclamation in which he has appointed the first of May, as the day for the prorogation of the First Session of this Parliament and the 2nd of May, as the commencement of the 2nd Session of the Fifth Parliament. Therefore, for the new Members of Parliament, when we take an adjournment today, I will be taken an adjournment sine die. That does not mean that you are free to travel to wherever you wish. I am simply doing it as a matter of course because it is in keeping with the provisions of the law. This Session will come to an end tomorrow.

[Suspension of SO 5[2] being 12:00 noon]

Honourable Members, I just want to draw your attention to the following: that from here, we would be going to Parliament, at Tower Hill for the laying-out of General Tarawally. After the laying-out ceremony, His Excellency the President has indicated to me and to the Leader of Government Business he wish to meet with all Members of Parliament after the laying-out ceremony in Committee Room 1 at Tower Hill. I wish to humbly request that we all attend that important meeting in Committee Room 1. On the Thursday, 2nd May, 2019 as I indicated early, we will be having the formal State Opening of the 2nd Session of the Fifth Parliament by His Excellency the President. Provision has been made to accommodate the spouses of Members of Parliament.

Honourable Members, Members whose spouses will not be accompanying them would kindly indicate to the Clerk of the House. Provisions have been made solely for spouses

as recognised by Law. If you do not wish to be accompanied by your spouse or if like Mr Speaker whose spouse is out of the jurisdiction, please let us know in good time, so that something can be done about the sitting arrangement. If you do not indicate to the Clerk, and suddenly your spouse turns up in Parliament, you might face an embarrassment of not having a seat for her. This is why I am emphasising this matter and bringing it to the attention of all Members of Parliament. I thank you very much.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am a happy man standing here this afternoon to say, thank you first of all to the Clerk of this House for asking the people of this country to pray for us for surviving the gruesome accident in the Rwanda. Let me take this opportunity, on behalf of myself and my colleagues to thank the people of this country for yielding to the call of the Clerk and Deputy Speaker for offering their prayers for us. This is because if we are here today, it is your prayers that have helped us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me at the juncture extend our thanks and appreciation to you, because you did not only act like the Speaker, but you acted like a father to us. Honourable Members, I am happy to report to this House that the Speaker was everywhere in order to ensure that Members of Parliament he took to Rwanda were care. Mr Speaker, I want to say thank you and we remain to be grateful to you.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to bring to the attention of this nation and colleagues that when it comes to politics, we should not use arms and ammunitions to defend politicians. I am talking directly to the general public. We should stop violence in politics or stop using violence in Parliament. I am saying this because when we are here, what we do and what we talk will not be the business of the public. I want to inform the general public about the role Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah played when we were admitted. Mr Speaker, it was unbelievable and I cannot imagine if APC had won, and this gentleman would have been a Vice President. He was in the room with me for two nights, sleeping on the chair *[Applause]*. My rib cage was affected and I was unable to clean myself after using the gents. I cannot imagine Honourable Chernor R.M. Bah was assisting to dress me up. Mr Speaker, it was unbelievable. When I was

struggling to get up, he told me, S. O. [2], 'bo na dat are kam slep ya for assist you. He said, **"Let me give you the bed pant."** This was unbelievable Honourable Cherner R.M. Bah virtually doing some of those odd jobs for me. My family and I will remain grateful to him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to use this opportunity on behalf of this House to extend our thanks and appreciation to the President of Rwanda and his Ministers. Mr Speaker, when we were admitted in hospital, almost every day a minister of that Government used to visit us, including the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of that Parliament. The Members of Parliament showed concern and we are grateful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for the fatherly role you played and Honourable Members and the general public. I want to remind the public to stop fighting for us. Mr Speaker, even when I was in pain, I used to turn on the bed and ask Honourable Hassan A. Sesay if he was okay. Honourable Hassan A. Sesay and I were in the same room. Mr Speaker, both of us used to go to Honourable Saa E. Lamina's room to know whether he was doing fine. So, that tells us that we should stop using the ordinary people to fight for us. We are like brothers and sisters. Nobody was there to assist us, our families were in Sierra Leone, but we stayed together and kept our peace. I want to thank the Clerk and the Leader of Parliament of this House because they made sure that our wives joined us in Rwanda. I also want to thank colleagues because everybody was worried. When they heard about the accident the Staff of Parliament were also worried. I want to thank you for your concern. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for the statement he has made and the recognition he has also made of the role played by Members of Parliament, particularly the Clerk of Parliament. Let me say that although the democratic dispensation under which we operate this Parliament dictates that we belong to different political groups, but that incident in Kigali, Rwanda showed that in the face of adversity, human beings are human beings. They are not driven by their political colours and I am very pleased to say that the conduct of that delegation that went to

Rwanda on your behalf demonstrated the highest principle of humanity to one another. I also want to bring to the attention of this House and to seek the permission of this House on two things. The care and attention that was given to our injured colleagues by the Government of Rwanda was most exemplary. The equipment we saw in the Hospital are equipment that you can only find in Hospital of the most developed countries of the World. We saw MIRS, CT Scanning Machines, etc. The professional expertise displayed by their doctors, I believe it was second to none. In light of that and the very special care extended to our delegation from His Excellency the President of Rwanda, President Paul Kagame deserved special reorganisation by this Parliament in two ways: first, you authorise me to officially write on behalf of Parliament to thank the Government and the people of Rwanda and in particular my counterpart, Madam Speaker of the Rwanda Parliament for the care and attention extended to our Members during that moment of adversity; and second, to suggest and proposed to the Rwandan Parliament, special cooperation Agreement between our two Parliaments that will entail regular exchange of visits between us in many fields as are practicable. If I have your permission, Honourable Members, I will write and fulfil your mandate. I wish to have a very clear indication that I do so on behalf of the entire House and that I have your mandate to proceed.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[That the Bilateral Cooperation between the Sierra Leone House of Parliament and the Rwanda Parliament has been adopted]

HON. P.C BAI KURR KANAGBARO SANKA III: Has that restitution passed unanimously?

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes Honourable Member.

HON. AJIBOLA MANLY-SPAIN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O 23 to report an incident. I represent Constituency 124 in Freetown, which covers the area where Parliament is situated and Tower Hill. On Saturday, 27th of April, 2019, there was an occurrence of fire accident around British Council late at night. As a result, thirty thatch houses were burnt down completely and seventy-three families were affected. I just

wanted to report this to the House. We went there to see what was happening and to assist the victims. I am sure the victims will appreciate any help from Members of Parliament. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member. You certainly do have the sympathy of this House which we ask you kindly to extend to your constituents.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I want to respond to Honourable Dickson M. Rogers' emotional but humane statement about what happened in Rwanda. And again his reference to our Leader Chernor R.M. Bah and the role he played during... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, all of us desire to participate in the Laying-out Ceremony in Parliament, I will put the privilege according to my office of having despatch vehicles at the disposal of all Members of Parliament, so that we all drive in a convoy to Parliament and avoid the traffic.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: I want to mention the fact that we on this side appreciate the fact that Honourable Dickson M. Rogers of the SLPP recognised the role our Leader played in Rwanda. Also, Honourable Dickson M. Rogers told the role Mr Speaker himself played. I want the public to know that we in this country are one united people, whether in the face of an accident or not, we continue to be the same united people of this country. What the Speaker and our Leader have demonstrated in Rwanda is a clear indication to show that we are the same people and we continue to be the same united people. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his statement.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12.20 p.m. and was adjourned sine die]