



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SESSION –SECOND MEETING

THURSDAY, 4TH FEBRUARY, 2021

SESSION – 2020/2021



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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Thursday, 4th February, 2021.

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THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE HEREBY RATIFIES THE FOLLOWING AGREEMENTS WHICH WERE LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE ON TUESDAY 2ND FEBRUARY,2021:

[A] FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT [INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING] BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK, MATERNAL, NEONATAL AND CHILD HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROJECT.

[B] AGENCY AGREEMENT [INSTALMENT SALE FINANCING] BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK, MATERNAL, NEONATAL AND CHILD HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROJECT.

[C] TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK, REGARDINGTHE MATERNAL, NEONATAL AND CHILD HEALTH STRENGTHENING PROJECT.

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SECOND READING, COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING
THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Thursday, 4th February, 2021

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Francis Ernest Farma, Read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:20 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]

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I want to advise that we put on our facemasks. I am sure Members of Parliament are the most vulnerable individuals when compared to other people. I also call on those in the galleries to put on their facemasks

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 2nd FEBRUARY, 2021

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me observe again as I did the last time that the air conditioning system is not working properly and the technicians are still working on it. There is no prospect that it can be repaired today. So, I crave the indulgence of every Member of Parliament to bear with the inclemency that we are subjected to and go through the Order Paper as quickly as possible. We are not to waste time today. In other words, we have to go through every item as quickly as we can.

Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021. As usual, we will skip pages 1, 2, 3 and 4. We start with Page 5. Do you have any observations or comments on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? If there is no correction of comment, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021 as presented?

HON AMBROSE M. LEBBY: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON SIMEON FEFEGULA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 2nd February, 2020 has been adopted as presented]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the only announcement I have is to continue to appeal to Members who are yet to take their Covid-19 vaccine. You have to take the vaccine for your own safety. It is good for you and it is good for your neighbour and the entire country. Let me add that any Member who has not taken the test will not be allowed to my chamber. I have to minimise the risks. If you have not taken the test, please do not attempt to come to my chamber because you will not be allowed to enter. Some people are still in denial, but this is very serious. I am sure the Opposition Leader has taken his and he is most welcome to my chamber. Let us proceed please.

IV. LAYING OF PAPERS

THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: *[Chief Whip]* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the Leader of Government Business and in my capacity as the Chief Whip of this House, I beg to lay on the Table of this House the following reports:

- A. The state of Human Rights in Sierra Leone Annual Report, 2018
- B. The state of the Human Rights in Sierra Leone Annual Report, 2019

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. The Chief Whip cannot lay these documents on the Table. The only alternative to the two leaders that are absent will be the Chairman of the Internal Affairs Committee who will be working on the State of Human Rights, but not the Chief Whip. I spoke with the Leader this morning and he assured me that his deputy will lay the document on the Table. That was what we agreed on, otherwise we will have to shelve them for the next adjourned date. I am pleading with this House.

THE SPEAKER: I hope we will not have to do that, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of Government Business called me this morning to inform me that he may not be present when we commence this sitting. I saw the Deputy Leader of Government Business because he walked into my chamber this morning. So, I cannot explain why he is not with us at this moment.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, it has been a norm in this Parliament that when the leader and the deputy are not around, the Chief Whip steps in.

THE SPEAKER: Are you sure it has been a norm, Honourable Member?

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I do not want a debate on this issue.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: I do not mind if I do not lay the Paper, but let us put the records straight. There has been a precedent in this Well when the then Majority Leader and his deputy were not around, the Chief Whip stepped in.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I agree with him. For the records, I am not disagreeing with the Government Whip at all. My point here is that the responsibility relates to laying of papers. It is different from debating a Motion. We are referring to laying of papers. This is a specific responsibility because Papers are usually laid by Ministers, but if the Minister in charge is not around, the only people that are authorised to represent him/her are the Leader and Deputy Leader of Government Business.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I also want the Opposition Leader to cite the specific provision he anchored his argument.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I appreciate that and for the edification of all of Members, the Honourable Member was here during the last Parliament, there was a point when we even agreed that for leaders to lay documents on behalf of ministers, we must see specific instructions. We agreed on that because there were two instances when ministers came and denied. However, we have always accepted that the business of the House should continue. The Leaders of Government Business represent the Executive Arm in this Chamber. That is why it is in their capacities as Leaders of Government Business they are allowed to lay documents here; otherwise, the Deputy Speaker is a very senior Member of this House to have assumed this role, but he cannot.

THE SPEAKER: I think your point is well taken and I want to refer the House to S.Os. 18, Paragraph 5. It reads: "*Papers, such as government policy papers for the information of Parliament, the reports and Annual Accounts of Statutory Corporations shall be presented to Parliament by a*

Minister of the Government, or, by the leave of Mr Speaker, the Majority Party Leader of the House or his representative, and its presentation shall be entered upon the Votes and Proceedings.” I am afraid, we shall have to concede to the point of the Leader of the Opposition.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, what you just read, even though I am not averse to what the Opposition Leader was saying, but you said either the representative. Who is the representative?

THE SPEAKER: Provided you have my leave.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Provided you have the leave of the Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Deputy Leader, I do not know why you came late. I was trying to defend you in your absence that I did see somebody who resembles you in my Chamber; or was it a phantom that I saw?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE [*Deputy Leader of Government Business*]: With your leave, Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os.18 [5] to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following documents:

- a. The state of Human Rights in Sierra Leone Annual Report, 2018; and
 - b. The state of the Human Rights in Sierra Leone Annual Report, 2019
- [Applause].*

VI. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

HON. SAHR CHARLES: I stand on S.Os. 18.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, S.Os. 18 is very broad.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, S.Os. 18 [1] reads: "*The laying of Papers, Treaties, Agreements, and Constitutional and Statutory Instruments involves the delivery in the office of the Clerk of sufficient copies thereof for distribution to Members of Parliament.*" Mr Speaker, my concern is that before the laying of the Papers by the Deputy Leader of Government Business, this House had already received copies of an Agreement for the construction of the University of Science and Technology in Kono. I believe that all Members of Parliament here present have received copies of that document. So, I want to know why it is skipped off from the documents that has just been presented to the House.

THE SPEAKER: You do not need to belabour the point, Honourable Member. The document you are referring to is not on the Order Paper.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Exactly, Mr Speaker. It is left with the Business Committee to decide when that document will appear on the Oder Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Shall we proceed with the Order Paper?

MINISTER OF FINANCE [*Patricia Lavalie, Deputy Minister of Finance*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021:

The Financing Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank, with an amount of **\$20.5MIn** regarding maternal, neonatal and child health strengthening project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the main objective of this project is to contribute towards Sierra Leone's reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child

and adolescent health and nutrition services strategy. This strategy is aimed at accelerating the reduction of preventable deaths of women, children and adolescence and ensuring their health and wellbeing through prioritised healthcare interventions.

This project would be financed jointly by the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, the Global Fund Facility as well as the Government of Sierra Leone. The development objective is to improve the quality and utilisation of the reproductive maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health and nutrition services in four districts; i.e., Pujehun, Karene, Bo and Moyamba districts. The financing consists of three key components. Component one is to improve access quality reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, adolescent, and health and nutrition services. The Islamic Development Bank will finance on the panel financing with both World Bank and Globe Financing facility access to quality, targeting women and children. The following activities will be undertaken under this component:

1. upgrading and equipping twelve primary healthcare centres, specifically the Basic Emergency Neonatal and Obstetrics Care Facilities in Pujehun, Karene, as well as Moyamba districts;
2. the project will consist of construction and equipping three district hospitals, including the maternity wards in Pujehun, Karene and Moyamba districts;
3. the project will also finance the construction of eight staff quarters in each district and each staff quarter will have three rooms, one sitting room, a kitchen, dining room and will include a total area of hundred and sixty-eight square metres per staff quarter; and

4. it will include the rehabilitation and equipping the Fistula Centre at Bo District Hospital.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Fistula Centre in Bo will be rehabilitated and equipped, so as to enhance the access and quality of service delivery related to fistula surgery and reintegration of women in their various communities. The project will also include providing essential agreements and supply for Primary Health Centres, procure, install and conduct regular preventive maintenance of Cold Chain equipment through procuring Solar Refrigeration for vaccines for the five districts, including Pujehun, Karene and Moyamba.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second component will include, supporting health system strengthening and reforms. Under this component, we will strengthen the Health Management Information System, finance the training for fifty M&D workers and finance the training of the health IT Officers, as well as provide training for one thousand four hundred and fifty-five healthcare workers in harmonising their reporting forms at the national level. We will also design an electronic reporting in the three districts, so as to enhance decision making at all levels.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the third component relates to project management. Under the project management component, the project will finance the remuneration of project staff as well as financing the acquisition of office equipment, vehicles, including ambulances for the healthcare unit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the delivery of essential and lifesaving care for improved maternal, neonatal, new born and child health remains limited in the country. The implementation of this project is therefore relevant and urgent. The project is expected to improve health infrastructure in the four districts to increase access to reproductive health, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent healthcare services. The key stakeholders are obviously the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, District Health Management Teams, Local Councils, Aberdeen Women Centre will benefit significantly, as well as Marie Stopes. They were all consulted during the preparation and appraisal of this project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the total cost of this project is **\$72.48 mln**. The Islamic Development Bank will contribute **\$20.5mln**, the World Bank will contribute **\$40mln**, the Global Financing Facility will contribute **\$10mln** and the Government of Sierra Leone will contribute **\$1.98mln**. Mr Speaker, the Agreement before you, specifically the Framework Agreement for the Instalment Sale Financing, as well as the Agency Agreement represents **\$13.4mln** of the overall project cost of **\$20.5mln**. The Technical Assistant Grant Agreement represents about half a million Dollars

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements:

- a. the Framework Agreement relating to the Instalment Sale Financing between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening Project;

- b. the Agency Agreement, in particular the Instalment Sale financing between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening Project;
- c. The Technical Assistance Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening Project.

I thank you.

[Question Proposed]

THE SPEAKER: Shall we agree that we shorten the debate on this matter because I frankly do not think it is controversial. I want to limit the number of contributors to three persons from either side, including women. The last time I was chastised. This time I want to take note of the chastisement that I suffered the last time by recognising the women among the contributors today.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, you have already said these Agreements are not controversial.

THE SPEAKER: So, three is still too much?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: So, we reduce that number to two?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank you very much.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: If we have two people from either side or the leaders will just round off the debate.

THE SPEAKER: I thank you very much. I start with the female Honourable Member from Bo.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Point of Order, Mr speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am not going to entertain it.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 47.

THE SPEAKER: I will not entertain that, Honourable Member.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, this is very important sir. I stand on S.Os. 47 [1]. You have been asking that we set the pace for the running of this Parliament.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, S.Os. 47 will not help the Honourable Member. This is not a Bill; it is an Agreement.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: If you go to Section 40, Sub-section 4 of the Constitution... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: You stood on the wrong S.Os, Honourable Member.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, I believe I stand on the right S.Os.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: S.Os. 47 will not help him at all. This is a House of rules.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, this is something that concerns the lives of Sierra Leoneans. We are talking about over **\$70mln** project. The documents were given to Members in less than two days. You cannot give such to Members of Parliament in less than two days and expect them to do justice to it. We should have at least nine days, so that we examine

such documents. We know it is not controversial and it stands to benefit our people, but it is very important that we look at it thoroughly.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Deputy Leader of Government Business, please take your seat. save your breath. I want to remind the Honourable Member from Kono that S.Os. 47 deals with Bills and this is not a Bill. For God's sake let us stop misleading the House.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: In that case, I refer you to Section 40 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: I am aware of the content of Section 40.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, if the Executive Arm of Government is entering into a loan or other agreement that has to do with the people of this country, it has to go through Parliament for ratification and it can only be ratified through an Act of Parliament. The terms and conditions in this Agreement constitute an Act of Parliament. Section 118 of the Constitution reads: 'No Loan Agreement without the Act of Parliament... - *[Interruption]*

THE SPEAKER: Hole your breath, Honourable Member. Again, you are misleading the House. An Act of Parliament is only one way by which this House can ratify an Agreement entered into by Government. Another way is by resolution. Please read it carefully and stop misleading the House.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like you rightly said, this Agreement is noncontroversial. On behalf of the women of this country, I want to appreciate the Minister for bringing this document to Parliament for ratification. It is something that has to do with the women and we all know

that there has been a hue and cry all over this country for the attention of women in terms of medication. If you listen to the 'Morning Coffee' radio programme, you will hear the women of this country crying from distance places, places that are far away from medical facilities. You hear them crying for medical attention. This means that the women are in need of maternal and healthcare facilities. They travel miles before they access one health centre. This has resulted in untimely death of our women. Many women have lost their lives due to lack of healthcare centres. This has been a serious issue in this country; and as a woman representing the women of this country, I am sure this Agreement is good for the women because it will help them deliver and raise their kids very well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to the Minister's explanation, few constructions will be undertaken. That is good particularly for the deprived communities, such as Karene and other places. We have heard a lot of complaints over the years about the poor medical conditions of the people of Karene. One of their MPs in this Well even made an appeal at one time for medical attention to be given to Karene District. I am sure this will take care of the Honourable Member's complaint and it will help the women of that area.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, perhaps all we need to do is to properly make sure that as Members of Parliament from these areas, we have to pay attention and ensure that these projects are properly monitored. We are not usually involved or considered, but when things are poorly done or implemented, we face the embarrassment because we interface with our people. So, I hope that when these projects are taken to our communities

or the different places you have mentioned, Members of Parliament will be considered.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, according to these Agreements, government is going to spend very little. Therefore, we should appreciate those providing the greatest support. We appreciate them and we want to see proper implementation of these projects, so that at the end of the day, the women enjoy good medical facilities in this country. I thank you very much for your attention *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member from Bo District. Let me just take this opportunity before I call on the next speaker to assure the Honourable Member from Kono. I know how passionate you feel about the establishment of the University of Kono, and let me assure you that the relevant Paper would be laid on this Table in due time. So, do not go around looking at the various S.Os. or the provisions in the Constitution. It will come when it will come. There is no shortcut to it at all.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Okay, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am looking for female Members of Parliament because the last time I was chastised.

HON. CATHERINE Z. TARAWALLY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the women, I want to say a big thank you Mr Speaker for recognising the women and for listening to us. We will always work with you and we are ready to stand by you. I also want to thank the active, energetic and wonderful Deputy Minister of Finance for always being here with us, both in good and in bad times *[Applause]*. There are times you

see her smiling and there are times she will not smile. We want to say thank you for being here again today. The Honourable Nenneh Lebbie has said it all that women suffer the most in this country. We the women of Sierra Leone are over **51%**. According to some statisticians, we have over **20%** single-parents who are women. These women are taking care of the houses in Sierra Leone and their children are under their control. So, ratifying this particular Agreement makes us feel fulfilled and it will ensure that women enjoy basic medical facilities they ought to enjoy. We want to thank you and to call on you to put all what it takes and ensure that the women in the villages enjoy basic medical facilities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that the Free Healthcare is still facing challenges. The problems of the Free Healthcare are not limited to single district because they are common problems facing every district in the country. So, if we are ratifying yet another Agreement to help the women of this country access medical facility, we feel fulfilled as women and even the men. We have the 'He' for 'She' men here, and we have our leaders who are very active and supportive. I thank the leaders for supporting the women and we want to see that you support this ratification for the benefit of the majority of Sierra Leoneans. We are the majority because we are over **51%**. If you support the ratification of this Agreement, we will be happy and it makes Sierra Leone a fulfilled nation.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you for giving us the opportunity to contribute and we will continue to work with you. I support the ratification of this Agreement because it is not a controversial Agreement and it stands to support the women of this country *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member from Makeni City. I think it is time I also recognise not only ordinary women, but grandmothers amongst us. I know those who are qualified as grandmothers in this House.

HON. PC BINTU MEAMA KAJUE KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I have three grandkids and I am sure I am qualified as a grandmother.

THE SPEAKER: I was with you in England. Madam Paramount Chief, you have the Floor.

HON. PC MEAMA KAJUE KOROMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just want to throw my voice to what has already been said by colleagues female Members. These Agreements are within our domain and we thank the Honourable Deputy Minister for bringing them here. I do not think they are controversial anyway. They will be beneficial to us the mothers, grandmothers and even the men because when we talk about reproduction, you are talking about both males and females. So, these Agreements are noncontroversial. We thank you very much, and I urge all of us here to take these Agreements with the seriousness they deserve. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Paramount Chief for her contribution. I recognise the Honourable Member from Kailahun.

HON. EMILIA LOLLOH TONGI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Probably Madam Deputy Minister heard my cry some time ago. I spoke about a lady that was going to give birth and they met her dead with the feet of her child in her hands. That was extraordinarily pathetic.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this particular Agreement is for us the women of this country. All of you seated here were brought to this world by us the women. We are ordained by God and that is why we need such opportunities. In other words, we need such opportunities, so that we can bring forth healthy children and at the same time save the lives of the women. Many women have paid their lives during childbirth, especially those in remote areas. For over sixty years there has never been a healthcare centre where I come from, i.e., Constituency 001. I would like the government to make sure that such opportunity is extended to that part of the country. I am sure if the women of this country hear about this, they might probably set up a Committee to thank His Excellency the President who is making all these opportunities available to the women.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is not much to be said, but to say thanks to His Excellency the President for thinking about the women and kids in this country. I am sure Sierra Leone is on top of the table when talking about maternal deaths in the world. It is a big shame for our country. Mr Speaker, now that opportunities like these are coming, I would like to thank Madam Minister who is a woman. I am sure she is pushing hard for this to materialise because she is involved and she is a mother. I hope and pray that we ratify these Agreements. Mr Speaker, I hope nobody says anything negative about the Agreements. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. I recognise the Chairperson of the Committee on Health.

HON. MOSES BAIMBA JORKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also thank my colleagues for intervening on my behalf to say a word or two *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I join my colleagues to say that this particular Agreement is a fine one and it is good for this country. It is known that maternal and infant mortality rate in this country are high. So, for the country to enter into such an Agreement is a laudable idea. I am happy for Karena because when I went to distribute drugs together with NMSA in that district, it came out that Karena District lacks healthcare facility and the people are suffering there. So, when Karena is mentioned in this document, I was really overwhelmed. I know that with the arrival of this project in that part of the country, maternal and infant mortality rate will be reduced in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the project entails a lot; i.e., construction of hospitals in the three districts mentioned and the rehabilitation of the Fistula Hospital in Bo Government Hospital. This is a laudable idea. Facilities will be provided after the construction of the hospitals in Pujehun, Moyamba and Karene districts. Those Hospitals are going to be equipped with drugs and other medical equipment. Again, a lot of training facilities are going to be provided to the health workers. That in itself is a very laudable idea. I want to thank you Madam Minister and your team for this particular project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Professor Alpha T. Wurie has always been talking about this project, but I never knew this was the project. When I was reading this Agreement, I was really happy. I said to myself

that this is the dream Professor Alpha T. Wurie was talking about. I am sure Honourable Members will join the queue and ratify this particular Agreement because it is noncontroversial. The only aspect about it that I want to plead with the Committee Members is to make sure that we join the team to ensure that we supervise this project, so that it comes out successful for the benefit of the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that fistula is a very bad condition for the women. This is a complication they get during delivery. It is a very bad complication which occurs in a manner I cannot explain here. However, I want you all to know that if a hospital is going to be constructed for that purpose, then I want to believe that it will be good for us. Those women who are ashamed to come out because of the obstetric condition they got during delivery will now feel free to come out. I know that when fistula is repaired very well, the patient will not shy to come into the society. Therefore, this Agreement is timely and I thank the government for entering into such an Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are few words I wanted to say about this particular Fistula Hospital in Bo that will benefit this country. I thank the Speaker, Madam Minister and all the Honourable Members who wanted me to say few words *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to the debate. Leader of Government Business, and the Leader of the Opposition, I will start with the Leader of the Opposition. Shall we now please round off the debate? We agreed on two Members from either side of the aisle and that has been done.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I would take the queue, but on our side, it was only one person that spoke.

THE SPEAKER: I said two from either side.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Yes, but we had only one.

THE SPEAKER: I said each side of the aisle

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: So you were not referring to parties?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I have listened to all the contributions before and considering the importance of women and children in this country, and the fact that they need much more than what they are getting, I support the ratification of this Agreement [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his contribution.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all Members of Parliament who have contributed to this Agreement. Of course, it is no secret that this Agreement is good for the women. I thank the women of this Parliament for supporting this Agreement. When once it is passed, we expect the Committee on Health to do due diligence on this Agreement. I would want the Chairman of the Health Committee to follow-up on this Agreement. Please make sure that the provisions in this Agreement are fulfilled to the letter. You would also have to visit all of these hospitals, especially the district hospitals this Agreement will cover. Again, make sure the women benefit. I thank you very much Honourable Members.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Acting Leader of Government Business for his contribution. Madam Deputy Minister, I do not know whether there is any point that requires any further elaboration or clarification.

MADAM PATRICIA LAVALIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of this House on Tuesday, 2nd February 2021:

- a. The Framework Agreement, the Instalment Sail Financing between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening project;
- b. the Agency Agreement, the Instalment Sail Financing between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank for the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening project; and
- c. the Technical Assistance Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Islamic Development Bank regarding the Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Strengthening project.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]

[The following Agreements as pronounced by the Deputy Minister, which were laid on the Table of this House on Tuesday 2nd February 2021 have been ratified]

V. Bill

THE MEDICAL EXAMINERS ACT 2020

[SECOND READING]

MR LAHAI LAWRENCE LEEMA [*Deputy Minister Of Internal Affairs*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Medical Examiners Act, 2020 be read the second time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Medical Examiners Bill that was laid in this Honourable House by the Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs on the 26th January, 2020 came into existence as a result of a Cabinet memorandum that was put forward by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This seeks to repeal and replace the Coroner's Act of Cap 9 of 1907, which is considered to be obsolete to the 12th Century England. We reviewed this Act as a legislative instrument that is not having the potencies or legal instruments to empower the investigators to do credible investigations that will help the State Prosecution to prosecute matters involving suspicion, unexplained or circumstantial deaths. And in this instance, many a time judges would certainly let go of criminals who become dangerous to society and to the existence of citizens who are law abiding and who are compliant to the laws of the state.

And on that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Medical Examiners Bill which seeks to repeal and replace the Coroners Act, makes provisions for adequate, efficient and effective investigations through the establishment of a permanent institution considered to be the Medical Examiner's Office, which will also be required to establish its staff. There will also be a budget to run it as a permanent institution that helps the state to conduct credible investigations into matters or circumstances where persons or group of persons are considered dead by unexplained circumstances or by means of violence or suspicion. So, in those instances,

with the aid of the Chief Medical Examiner and his staff, they will be able to conduct credible investigations, thereby aiding the state prosecution to do a proper job in which the Judiciary of the state will be able to convict and make society safe not only for citizens, but even investors and those who see Sierra Leone as a safe haven. Mr Speaker, after we got the approval of the memorandum on the 5th meeting at Cabinet, the Ministry of Internal Affairs worked, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Law Officers Department, developed this draft Medical Examiners Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are differences between the Coroners Act which this Bill seeks to replace. Let me start with the similarities before the differences, so that you can also see the justification for ratifying and passing this Bill into Law. When passed into law, it will help making this country safe and also help to fight against crime. Mr Speaker, both the Coroners Act of 1907 which is Cap 9 of the Laws of Sierra Leone and the Medical Examiners Bill seek to investigate untimely, suspicious, sudden and violence deaths. The both determine the cause of death, whether it was due to natural cause or homicide, accident or suicide. Mr Speaker, for unexplained causes, both assign the cause of death when issuing death certificates.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, looking at the differences between the two, a Coroner is not required to have a medical background, whereas a Medical Examiner is always required to be a physician. A Medical Examiner performs autopsy whilst a Coroner does not. A Medical Examiner is always almost required to be a forensic pathologist, whereas a Coroner is not. A

Coroner may be elected or appointed while a Medical Examiner is always appointed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with the emergency of cliques and gangs in our society today, if this Bill is enacted into law, we will have medical practitioners, such as pathologists who will be able to conduct scientific investigation that will aid the state prosecution to do a proper prosecution or presentation of their case before the court. The court in turn will be able to resolve the case by sending dangerous persons to confinement and thereby making society safe for all law abiding citizens.

On that note, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Medical Examiners Act, 2020 be read the second time
[Applause].

[Question Proposed and Put]

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 47[2]. I just want to ask a question sir. Few minutes ago, you said you would not allow short cut in this Parliament. Mr Speaker, when the Honourable from Kono stood on a particular S.Os. you over ruled, but the last time this Bill was tabled and read for the first time, the Deputy Leader of Government Business stood on S.Os. 47[2] and committed the Bill to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny. We want to know what happened because it was not taken to the Legislative Committee. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, with your leave, I stand on S.Os. 47[2]. It reads: "*A pre-legislative scrutiny and discussion of a Bill in camera*

may be arranged where necessary between Members and the Minister or Member in charge of the Bill.”

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the last meeting, I would have recommended to the Ministry of Internal Affairs for this Bill to be committed to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny, but we have sat at leadership level and agreed that it is not necessary. The Minister has presented the Bill and its left with us Members of Parliament to debate the Bill or commit it to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have before us the Medical Examiners Act which seeks to repeal and replace the Coroners Act of 1907. This is a very old law and I do not think anyone of us here was born in 1907, not even the Speaker was not born in 1907. Mr Speaker, we are repealing and replacing this Act with an Act that will benefit every Sierra Leonean. Mr Speaker, over the years we have been having one individual who is in charge of forensic pathology in terms of investigating unwanted deaths that have been occurring in Sierra Leone. This is also happening in our villages because people die without any just cause.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs has already started a debate on this Bill. However, we are not conclusive whether we debate this Bill or commit same to the Legislative Committee for further scrutiny. As the Deputy Leader of Government Business said, it is up to us to decide. I am sure Members of Parliament should be clear about what this Bill is all about. In other words, it is imperative for Members to understand the

details of this Bill before it is brought here. Mr Speaker, we need to repeal and replace this Bill, but we can only do that when there is adequate understanding of the content of the Bill. This is because we want it to stand the test of time like the one we are repealing now. So, I think we cannot debate this Bill today. We have to commit to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny, so that Members will have the opportunity to ask relevant questions before we get back to this Well.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wish to assure you that this Bill will not be concluded today. We are going to debate the Bill before committing it to the Legislative Committee. This Bill has been in our possession for the past few weeks.

HON. HASSAN SESAY: Deputy Leader, a Cap is an Act, Sir.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, after the second reading today, we will commit the Bill to the Legislative Committee and the Minister and his team shall be in attendance. We will invite all Members of Parliament to be part of the Legislative Committee. The Legislative Committee will have to present a report to the plenary. For the sake of time, let us just debate the Bill and commit the Bill to the Legislative Committee. I want to encourage all Members of Parliament to attend that legislative hearing, so that we listen to the Minister.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I frankly do not understand what you are trying to get at, Honourable Member. I am saying this because if you read S.Os. 50 and 51, it is very clear that we are on the right track. We

have to do the second reading before committing this Bill to the Legislative Committee.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, in this House, we use the word pre-ledge on a number of occasions, but pre-ledge connotes something totally different. We have to make progress, Mr Speaker. What is happening is not palatable because we were hoping to have been taken through before coming to this point. However, I am sure some of our colleagues are prepared to debate this Bill. However, I will not support S.Os. 51. I will prefer S.Os. 37 instead, of S.Os. 51.

THE SPEAKER: Well, I do not know why you prefer S.Os. 37. Honourable Members, after consultations with the leaders, I have come to the considered opinion that we cannot proceed with the Second Reading of this Bill because the Parent Act of 1907 has not been made available to Members of Parliament [*Applause*]. The Parent Act is necessary in this case. I know some of you are ready, but a large number of other Members are not ready.

Secondly, Honourable Members, you will not want to debate in vacuum because your debate should be well informed and the best information will be when you can read what is being proposed as your new Act against the backdrop of the existing one you are seeking to repeal. You will be in a better position to make comparisons if the Parent Act is made available. Since that is not available, we will postpone further consideration of the Second Reading of this Bill until the Parent Act is distributed.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. We will make the Coroners Act, 1907 available to Members of Parliament before the close of business tomorrow and I will encourage all Members of Parliament to read this Bill in tandem with the Parent Act. We will invoke S.Os. 47 [2] if the leadership decides to commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee. I will inform you, but we should not totally rely on

that, Honourable Members. Make sure you read the Bill in tandem with the Coroners Act when it is provided. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I hope it will not be necessary to commit it to a pre-legislative hearing because once the Parent Act has been made available, you now have the advantage of reading the Act against that backdrop and then come to debate during the Second Reading. That is where you discuss the principles and policies underpinning the new Bill and then we can move on to the Committee Stage. There will be no need for a pre-legislative hearing. We want to bring this Bill again next week Thursday, so that you have a whole week. However, you can choose between Tuesday and Thursday.

Mr Minister, thank you for your presentation you have done your own bit as far as this Second Reading is concerned. You may now take your seat. I hope every deliberate effort will be made to ensure that Members of Parliament get copies of the Parent Act. So, you have some homework to do over the weekend. You will be duly notified through the Order Paper as to the date we shall take this Bill up, whether on Tuesday or Thursday. However, one thing is certain, the Parent Act should be distributed to you latest tomorrow.

HON. ALHAJI SORIBA TURAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 23. This is very important sir.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 23 to draw the attention of this House to something that came as a shock to all of us this morning. We woke up this morning and noticed that the fuel pump price has been increased from **Le 7,000** to **Le 8,500**. We were not notified, but under the current economic state of the country, that increment is not timely. The increase will automatically affect the cost of transportation for the people and we have been seeing long queues of people on the streets. So, I do not know why we have not been informed or why it is so sudden, probably we need an explanation. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you could recall that the pump price of fuel was initially increased to **Le 9,000**, but being a listening government

and sympathetic to the people, we reduced the pump price from **Le 9,000** to **Le 8,000** and later **Le 7,000**.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Honourable Member, you are wrong. Please put the records straight. It was not **Le 9,000** Mr Speaker. It was **Le 8,500**

THE SPEAKER I am going to overrule both of you, Honourable Members.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: He did not allow me to land, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are just generating controversy.

HON. SORIBA TURAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have a very serious issue between my people in the Constituency and Kingho Mining Company. I am sure since they came to that Constituency around 2011, they failed to honour their responsibilities in the Chieftdom and the Constituency. For example, they have not been paying surface rent and even the land Agreement they had with my constituents for the two sites they are operating, they have never paid for those places. My constituents reported this issue to me severally. My constituents visit my home every month to chat the way forward. That is why I want your good Office to intervene. I thank God that the Chairman of the Committee on Mines is here.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I advise that you frame a question for the attention of the relevant Minister. Please utilise the procedure of Question Time, rather than bringing it under S.Os. 23. I cannot answer your question, nor can anyone else here.

HON. SORIBA TURAY: I want your good Office and the Committee on Mines to intervene.

THE SPEAKER: I prefer you put it in the form of a question for the Minister of Mines.

HON. SORIBA TURAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

HON. BERNADETTE WUYATTA SONGA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 23. I would like to bring to the notice of this House a very disturbing situation parents have been complaining about in my constituency. I have done what I could by bringing it to the

notice of the relevant Ministry, which is the Ministry of Education. The situation has to do with the WASSCE results of a school being completely seized. In other words, the results of the school in question were not released and that has taken weeks now. I have been trying to ensure that the issue is rectified, but that has not been done. What happened two weeks ago was that the school was notified that their results had been released, but was a lie. The parents had to buy scratch cards to access their results.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I personally do not understand why parents would have to buy scratch cards after paying examination fees for their children. Why buying scratch cards to access their children's results. I do not find this acceptable. The parents bought scratch cards to view their results online, but found out that only twenty names were released out of the entire school. Again, they sent the same notice and the pupils had to rush, but discovered that only few results were released. The problem that we have is that the parents are unnecessarily spending on scratch cards for their children to view their results. To me, this is deliberate and an attempt to extort money from parents. It is becoming like a business. The results of Holy Ghost Secondary School have not been released. I just do not know what to do to help them. The parents have been calling me constantly. The pupils are disturbing me with the same issue, Mr Speaker. I thought I should bring this issue to the notice of this House, so that we look for possible ways of helping them. I am a member of the Committee on Education and I have done what I could with the Committee membership to resolve the issue, but it is still unresolved. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. EMILIA L. TUNGI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, COVID 19 is actually disturbing each and every one of us. I know we have to fight COVID seriously, but the Office of National Security [ONS] and the Police are seriously disturbing my people. Let us sensitise the villagers to put on their facemasks. On Friday last week, they arrested over 126 villagers without facemasks. They never knew they were supposed to put on facemasks. The charges or fines levied on them for failing to put on facemasks were between **Le 100,000** to **Le 500,000**. They were locked up in cells. I was calling for them to be released. The arrested villagers had to request from other relatives from the

neighbouring countries to come and pay their fines. This is not fair because these are illiterate people. We need to educate them properly. We need to sensitise them first before imposing punishment on them. So this is what I actually wanted to bring to your attention because it is not fair at all. I thank you.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Mr Speaker, with your leave, I would like to address you on some important matters. To start with, I stood in this Well a couple of weeks ago, and I brought to your kind attention an issue relating to the placement of local courts. This relate to either the Office of the Attorney General or the Ministry of Local Government. Mr Speaker, ever since I raised that issue, I have not seen that particular matter on any of the Other Papers. So, I wish to state here that this particular matter is very serious and it is affecting our people in the villages or in local communities. In this regard, I crave your indulgence for this matter to be put on the Order Paper speedily, so that we lay this issue to rest. This matter is extremely important and it behoves this Parliament to treat such matters seriously. If we continue to delay this particular issue, it will turn out to be bad and at the end of the day, the public will blame Parliament for whatever that goes wrong. So, I crave your indulgence and this House to ensure that we put this thing to rest.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is no gainsaying that in the Western World, ICT specialists use their ideas to create Apps or to create institutions for business. Our ICT specialists in Sierra Leone use their knowledge to impersonate innocent citizens. It has come to a time when they have even started creating Facebook accounts for politicians; they create WhatsApp accounts of politicians to create havoc. I wish to report today that one of them have been apprehended [*Applause*]. Incidentally, the recidivist used my name and the name of the Leader of Government Business to extort money. Mr Speaker, even as I address this House, he is in the custody of the police at the Aberdeen branch. So, I crave your indulgence for this criminal to be brought to Parliament because we want to set a clear example. In fact, I have opted to prosecute him personally in court [*Applause*]. I am not even going to allow any of my

juniors in my chambers to prosecute him. I am doing that myself because I have to see him behind bars for some years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want this criminal to be brought here for the public to see. In fact, the public has been blaming Members of Parliament. They have been saying that Members of Parliament are extorting moneys from presidential nominees when they come for parliamentary approval. These are the fellows who have been extorting moneys from innocent and unsuspecting members of the public; thereby creating the impression that Members of Parliament have been doing that. Again, some of our brothers and sisters who do not know some of these issues went and endorsed. This fellow has been asking leaders or nominees to pay money. The evidence is everywhere, but the good thing is that we have apprehended the criminal. I want us to make a show of him for the public to know that he is one of the criminals that has been parading the streets using the names of Members of Parliament to get money. They extort moneys from people who have built their integrity and image over the years. So, I want us to expose him. In fact, we have even ordered the police to bring him to Parliament. I would have wanted him to be brought in this Well in the full view of the media, so that we inform the public about these people. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Deputy Speaker for the two matters he has brought to the attention of the House. Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker has raised two very important matters to which I would like to respond. Indeed it is true that some weeks ago, he raised this question about the local courts in the country that have gone without proper engagement. I am fully conversant with the situation because I am directly affected. I have been getting representations from various quarters in my part of the country that they have gone for over two years without a Chairman of the Local Court or the necessary personnel to enable the court functions properly.

Honourable Members, I think the problem is between two departments of government and I went to the extent of engaging those two departments in the presence of the Honourable Vice President. The two departments that deal directly with local courts and their personnel are the Ministry of Local Government and the Office of the Attorney

General and Minister of Justice. It was resolved in light of the Local Courts Act of 2009 that transfer responsibility for the local courts is from Local Government to the Judiciary, headed by the Chief Justice. We were able to come to an understanding that in order to solve [a], the question of delay and at the same time meet the requirements of the Local Courts Act of 2009, the two officials need to work together. You all know that the Chief Justice has not got the representation on the ground as far as the provinces are concerned and the Minister of Local Government is well represented at that level. So, the task of identifying qualified candidates for appointment is left in the hands of the Ministry of Local Government; and once they have been identified, he will then prepare the list and submit same to the Chief Justice for appointment. So that way, we are able to satisfy the requirements of the Act and also speed up the process. I do not think much has been done, but what you have done is to put me on notice; maybe what I need to do immediately I rise from here, is to invite both the Attorney General and the Minister of Local Government to my Chambers to enquire what has been done to expedite the process. We have to bring the non-functionality of the local courts to an end and I hope Members would feel satisfied with that.

Honourable Members, the Deputy Speaker spoke about the so called ICT specialists who have turned out to be suspected crooks. I think we need to address this issue with the public. I am sure this has been going on for some time now. I am also aware that various names in this Well have been used by these criminals, including my own name. So, I think we should invite the police to bring the suspect and give us the opportunity to inform the general public and then hand him over again to the police to do the needful, taking into account the provisions in Section 23 of the Constitution.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: In view of that, Mr Speaker, I have been directed by the Leader of Government Business to inform all Members of Parliament and the media that there will be a press conference in Committee Room 1 at 2:00 p.m. to present the suspect to the public. I thank you.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 23. This is a rejoinder to what the Deputy alluded to. I think we should do this in tandem with Orange Network

because we have stood in this Well several times to complain about these criminals using our names to extort moneys. We are expecting the mobile companies to put more effort, so that we clampdown these recidivists.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the newly appointed Minister of Health and Sanitation was here two days ago and he showed us a message purported to have been sent to him by the Leader of Government Business. The criminal used the name of the Leader of Government Business, saying that his mother passed away and he needed some money for the funeral arrangements. The Minister sent the money to the criminal. A week ago, I was in Bo and I met with the High Court Judge of Bo whom I have never seen before. We have never seen each other. Mr Speaker, when I was introduced, he was shocked. He asked whether I was the Honourable Dickson Rogers. He told me that somebody used my name to ask him for money. He said how Honourable Dickson Rogers could ask for money when they have not met before.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a shame for some of us. People use our names to defraud other members of the public. Criminals have been saying: "I am Honourable Dickson Rogers and I am stranded in Pujehun, please send Le1mIn for me." I have stood in this Well times without number to make this point clear. I have even announced the phone numbers these criminals are using to defraud the public. I am sure if we want to deal with these criminals, I think we should do it in tandem with the mobile companies because every responsible mobile company should know who owns a particular phone number.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, provided the Simcard is registered.

HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS: This is why we have asked them to register every Sim card in this country. I am thinking that these people are doing it in collaboration with some officers in this Parliament and the mobile companies. I want to suggest that we also summon the mobile companies to express our dissatisfaction regarding the way they are handling our numbers. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

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

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Mr Speaker, the Chief Whip was saying something about the criminal that has been apprehended. What happened was that the newly appointed Minister of Health and Sanitation came to the Office of the Leader of Government Business... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. BERNADETTE W. SONGA: Mr Speaker, I stood earlier on S.Os. 23. Please address issue I raised earlier. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I obviously cannot address that issue, Honourable Member. The appropriate person to do that is the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. We have summoned him before on this same issue, but if it is the wish of the House, we can summon him again to come and update us on what is happening about the results being seized. I am sure the Committee on Basic and Senior Secondary Education can handle that issue. Where is the Chairman of that particular Committee? If he is not here, let the Deputy Chairman talk to us.

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN-WILLIAMS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that issue has been discussed before the Honourable Member stood on S.Os. 23. We are in the planning stage to invite the necessary institutions, so that we can address this issue. We considered it as exploitation of people who are already suffering economic problems. We also had similar discussions in the office of the Deputy Leader of Government Business. Some pupils came from Kabala to discuss similar issue and we are trying to probe into that issue. We shall report to the House accordingly, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I want to state here that this matter has been lingering for some time. The WASSCE results have been out for some time now and there are still a number of schools whose results have been withheld and they do not know their plights. So, shall we say you take action and report within two weeks, Honourable Member?

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN-WILLIAMS; Noted, Mr Speaker. This will be discussed with the Chairman and the entire membership.

THE SPEAKER: Please take it up with the relevant Ministry and the other agencies involved and report to the House in two weeks

HON. JOSEPH LAMIN WILLIAMS: Okay, Mr Speaker.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the Chief Weep spoke about the registration of SIM cards by the mobile companies and I think we have done justice to that as a House. However, there is still a bottleneck that is very difficult for Sierra Leoneans. For almost three, if not four years now, the National Civil Registration Authority [NCRA] has not issued the National ID Cards to citizens. This is why it is very difficult for mobile companies to register SIM cards. Mr Speaker, please use your good office to summon the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We want to know why they have not issued the ID cards to the public. You cannot ask someone to register his/her SIM card without any form of identification. Mr Speaker, even when people go for license, they need the national ID cards to ascertain that they are Sierra Leoneans. If you go for passport, you need to have the national ID card. I am sure this has not been done in the past three years.

THE SPEAKER: This is a very important matter. Where is the Chairperson for the Committee on Internal Affairs?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what our colleague from Kambia is saying is very important. The national ID card is the right of every citizen. I am certain that every Sierra Leonean must have it. So, I would want to encourage the Committee on Internal Affairs to summon the NCRA and ask the relevant questions and report to the House. This goes beyond just registering SIM cards.

THE SPEAKER: I want the Chairman to follow up. This is very important.

HON. BOSTON MUNDA: Mr Speaker, in line with what the Chief Whip said regarding the mobile phone companies, I think SIM card registration was part of the Regulations laid in this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: That is correct, Honourable Member.

HON. BOSTON MUNDA: I think the registration process has to go with two alternatives; i.e., either with your national ID card or voter ID card. So, we have started engagement with NATCOM and other agencies to ensure that they implement those Regulations. Mr Speaker, considering the fact that all citizens are subscribers to these mobile phone companies, we must ensure that they register their SIM cards in order to minimise these problems, especially the ones leading to fraud or impersonation. I want to assure you that the Committee will continue to engage NATCOM on this issue.

HON. CHERNOR R.M BAH: Mr Speaker, we are not supposed to be debating this issue at all. What the Chairman of the Committee on Information and Communications has done is to throw more spanners to the work. We have many people who are adults now, but did not register to vote. Are we going to deprive them of owning SIM cards? Let us find ways of addressing these issues.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we have to get the Chairperson of the Internal Affairs Committee. He was here a while ago. Honourable Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs, we have not called you back to come and swear to anything, but just to inform this House about the current status of the NCRA. It has been brought to the attention of the House that national IC cards have not been made available to citizens for quite some time and we want you to update the House on that issue.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, the issue of the national ID cards is a process. I am also concern and the institutions that are in charge are trying to do something. I heard that the process will start in June.

THE SPEAKER: June?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: That was what I was told, Mr Speaker. I am not sure if it is going to be in June, but I will inform you accordingly during the next sitting. I will talk to the Director General of NCRA and the relevant institutions that are in charge of this particular process.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, in light of what the Deputy Chief Whip said, going forward, we would encourage all Committee Chairmen to ensure that whenever

responsibilities are bestowed on them by this House, they should present a formal report. Mr Speaker, Committee Chairpersons are in the habit of not presenting reports even after being asked to investigate an issue. In fact, some of them do not investigate or inform this House. So, I want to encourage all Chairpersons of Committees and their deputies to ensure that whenever assignments are given by this House for investigations, they should do that and report to this House. It is only when you do your assignment diligently that will guarantee your reappointment as Chairperson. If you do not do your work, I am very sure the leadership will not consider your reappointment. I thank you very much.

HON. FODAY M. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.Os. 23 to commend the President of this Republic for taking the decision to close the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea. Mr Speaker, this border was closed almost one year now due to COVID 19.

THE SPEAKER: Intermittently, Honourable Member.

HON. FODAY M. CONTEH: Mr Speaker, I want to say it was continuous and not intermittent because the people do not know when the border was opened or closed. In fact, it is business for people at the border. It is a pity that even Members of Parliament do not even know what is happening. Most of what should be explained officially is never explained and people are living on rumours. I cannot accept the word 'intermittently' because the four chiefdoms in my constituency border with neighbouring Guinea. I have never been officially been informed since April, 2020 that the border has been closed or opened in any part of the country. I want to suggest here that since the constituencies of many Members of Parliament border with neighbouring Guinea, those Members of Parliament be involved in all phases of negotiations. They should actively participate in the negotiations because they feel the pains our people go through. In other words, Members of Parliament know what is going on in their localities. So, if they are involved, they will at least explain to our people and the people will understand. The people should know what is going on. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to

bring this issue to the House. Again, I want to urge the Government to negotiate further, so that the problems of our people are alleviated. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for raising this very important matter. I want to inform this House that I led the presidential delegation to Guinea last week to deal with this very issue. I am certain that negotiations are ongoing and I am involved in what is taking place. I am also sure that in the not too distant future, we will be able to resolve the outstanding issues affecting the closure of the border and the suffering the people of both countries have been incurring due to the border closure. This is a very serious problem, and every effort is being made to find a lasting solution. I cannot elaborate further than this, but I want to assure this House that talks are ongoing to resolve all outstanding issues so that normalcy is restored at the border between Sierra Leone and Guinea.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some months ago, you told us to make use of S.Os. 23 and we should make sure that the people or the ministers or the institutions come here to answer questions.

THE SPEAKER: I did not say that, Honourable Member. I said let us utilise the procedure of Question Time more than S.Os. 23.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: You are correct, Mr Speaker and that was what I was trying to say. Mr Speaker, I am sure we pay insurance in this country, but nothing has been done. I made a report about that and I made some research about it, but nothing has happened. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I want to advise you to approach the Clerk and enquire about the status of your questions, so that you take them to the point where they cannot come back to the House.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 12:35 p.m. and was adjourned to Tuesday, 9th February, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.]