



**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN**

E-mail: sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com/admin@parliament.gov.sl



30th MAY, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

FIFTH ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONCLUDES DEBATE ON PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Monday 30/05/2022 concluded debates on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency the President, Brigadier Rt. Julius Maada Bio's address, he so graciously delivered on the Occasion of the State Opening of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Tuesday 10th May 2022.

In his submission, Hon. Aaron Aruna Koroma denounced previous debaters who suggested that President Bio be given chance to repeat in office by 2023 and also informed that many roads were constructed by the past government in the Southeast of the ruling party stronghold, but currently the government is not replicating same in their stronghold, the north.

Referencing the empowerment of women, he brought indicators of women being removed from high state offices and maltreated. He spoke about strike actions of government workers, revealing that police COVID-19 wage has been deducted, despite the current economic situation, advising the government to consider the security sector. He raised concerns over the hike in fuel prices, asking the government to forego certain taxation to ameliorate the suffering of people.

He expressed disappointment in massive deforestation, asking the government to close the sector that is responsible for environmental protection. He spoke on behalf of teachers for salary increments.

Hon Ibrahim Tawa Conteh started his debate by clarifying the removal of MPs by laws and the election of the Speaker of Parliament by the procedure and law. The MP, spoke about the national debt, relating to the appreciation of the US dollar, commending the government. He assured that, the government would continue to fulfill its manifesto promises including the construction of the Lungi Bridge in due course. He said Sierra Leone has made significant progress on food security. For the Auditor General's Report, he advanced reasons for the delay of the report and appealed to the Leadership to push for debate of the document, denouncing the bad precedent of the previous government. He also justified the reason for the removal of certain women and informed that President Bio would continue to appoint women naming the Sierra Leone High Commissioner to Kenya, Deputy Police IG, and a host of others as examples

of women appointed by the President. He commended the government for the social safety net cash transfer among others.

Hon. Salieu Osman Sesay debunked the previous debater for disappointing the people in his debate on the economy and the national debt, relative to the foreign exchange rate. For the global economic downturn, he recalled that the COVID-19 is a blessing and recalled as well, when President Koroma took a very bad economy, but they were able to manage it, amidst the inflation. He urged the government to work with the private sector investment, to ameliorate the situation.

He informed that prices of goods have increased rapidly. Comparatively, he lauds former President Koroma for economic wellbeing and denounced President Bio, adding that the latter did not have a sound economic policy to control the exchange rate, giving indicators on the exchange rate and inflation. He used the opportunity to call on President Bio to reconstruct the Makeni Hospital Road and also urged him to do more.

Hon Keikura Vandy while thanking the President, clarified certain economic aspects referencing the past. He advanced indicators on human capital development, heaping praises on the government for the approval of schools and recruitment, replacement of teachers, and payment of school fees subsidy as well as payment of fees for public exams nationally. He debunked a certain previous debater on teachers' salaries. For energy, he said accessibility has increased rapidly, giving indicators on expansion, customer base, and megawatts. He spoke about world bank support to electricity for Freetown and Lungi. He denounced previous debaters for heaping economic praises on the past government.

Hon. Kusan Sesay thanked President Bio for the speech. The MP decried President Bio for taking the country aback, for relating his development to the National Census, which he claimed is not credible; adding that, most people were not counted. He recalled the President's promises on operationalizing tech-voc institutions and went on to denounce energy accessibility and the graveling of roads. He urged the President to do more as they approached the forthcoming election. He cited Kabala as a town that is yet to get electricity and other developments.

Hon. P. C Bai Kurr Kanagboro Sanka III, while giving the motion of thanks, related it to the freedom, and human capital development, urging all to support the Free Quality Education on the national agenda. He used the opportunity to ask the government to approve more teachers and to pay more attention to sciences and technology to transform the nation into development. He appealed to the government to complete the construction of the Masingbe Tech-voc.

He spoke about the recent discovery of gas and petroleum as mere blessings and good luck to the nation. He acclaimed Sierra Leone's rebranding position at the United Nations, thanking President Bio for that. He appealed for females pupils doing sciences to be given more opportunities.

Leader of C4C, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina said some debaters were not honest in their contributions, relating their comments to hate. According to the Leader, "The, Winner Takes

All" is one of the factors responsible for the problems among the politicians and hence called for political tolerance and national cohesion. The C4C Leader requested positive recommendations for national developments, peace, and cohesion.

The Leader commended President Bio for his positive strides geared towards a global perspective, relative to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that Sierra Leone is thriving well in the international arena and continue to gain support from partners, giving indicators.

He heaped praises on the government for the abolition of bad laws to gain an international benchmark, giving attribution to President Bio's transfer of military power to civil rule. He spoke well on education, payment of salary at a goal to all MDAs, the boom in mining with a tendency to reflect on the national budget, the First Lady project on Girls, the piloting of the Gender Empowerment Bill, support to Local Councils, President Bio's respect for Paramount Chiefs, the unconstitutional removal of the former Vice President by former President Koroma as well as removing himself as Mayor and went on to decry the former government for bad governance. He commended the government for the creation of certain institutions and creating an environment for large-scale mining companies to thrive transparently, citing the largest payment of Community Development Action by mining companies, relative to good mining policies and legislation advanced by this government. He revealed a series of development indicators in Kono District on roads, education, and huge benefits from mining and assured the government of their support and proffered solutions.

Hon Cecilia Mabinty Bangura decried the government for failing to improve the Welfare of the people and informed that, her District Karena is very strategic, but is neglected by this government. She denounced the government for partial treatment adding that, her people are still waiting for government promises. She said over nine thousand people of Karena voted for President Bio in 2018. According to her, the past government left money for the construction of roads. She spoke about food insecurity and would aggravate the health of many, asking for the Tomabu Rice. According to her, this government assured that they assumed a broken economy, but they have not been able to fix it and went to reference indicators to poverty-related situations.

Deputy Leader of Government Business Hon Bashiru Silikie while thanking, described President as a visionary leader. He decried the previous debaters for discrediting the President comparatively on development. Referencing, roads, he recalled that most of the projects were brought by Late President Kabba and commended the current government for predicting continuity, highlighting the indicators. The MP went on to denounce the past government for bad education and commended the government for the rapid improvement in that sector, asking all and sundry to support the initiative. According to him, SLPP believes in building institutions, but the APC would come and make their way. He blamed the APC for boycotting peace and national cohesion. He recalled criticisms of the press of the President, during his days in opposition, but after assuming power, he abolished the Public Order Act, and the death penalty and built a lot of good institutions. Recruitment of teachers, training of more medical

doctors, constructions, and rehabilitation of hospitals. He said that Bo and Kenema are now enjoying sustainable electricity condemning the APC, adding that they accumulated so many debts. He categorically stated that President Bio is a good man and one can not bring a good man down.

The Whip of the Opposition, Hon. Hassan Sesay while thanking the President clarified certain issues, made by the Leader of C4C. The Whip said the colleague MP did not tell the proper story on his removal as Mayor and went to advance reasons. He decried the President on the control of inflation and went on to reference the reason advanced by the Bank Governor on the denomination of the national currency to hyperinflation.

He said the President promised youth entrepreneurship but did not actualize it, Lungi Bridge that was promised is no longer measured in the speech and changed into four ferries on Public-Private Partnership. Comparatively, he said the rumor that the government is planning to bring the Proportional Representation, Constituency method is better than the latter. He spoke about the credit facility provided by Government to support Small Medium Enterprises (SME), but expressed concerns as to why an international organization got involved or benefited from it, The MP spoke about money spent on Agriculture, but the country is yet to achieve food security. He spoke about summoning certain Bank governors to answer questions on the currency.

Deputy Leader of Opposition Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said the colleagues on the other side are using COVID-19 to relate it to the economic problems, adding that one should not blame the war between Russia and Ukraine on Sierra Leone's economic problems. According to him, there is weakness in the system. He said if the government can not speak the truth, then they are not helping the situation. He said their people are going through hunger, adding that too many people are starving from hunger. "Things are simply impossible in this country" he stated. For Free Quality Education, he informed that there should be an improvement in school feeding. On the importance of Free medical care, he said there is a lacuna there, adding there are lacked of drugs at health facilities. He said too many people are dying, not only as a result of health but difficulties. He called for peace and reconciliation and went on to say, the legislation has not been implemented. Peace and reconciliation he said are very necessary and timely. 'If we work together as a national, we should be able to identify the gaps and mistakes which need to be addressed very urgently" he concluded.

Rounding up the debate, Leader of Opposition, Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah joined others to congratulate President Bio. He referenced and questioned certain aspects of the speech. The opposition Leader raised concerns over those who made lot of references to the former President instead of thanking the President, adding that, they are part of governance. He said colleague MPs on the ruling side not to take offense, when they are criticized. According to him, they are identifying the gaps in the speech to enhance improvement. Speaking on the decline of inflation, he comparatively informed that, the country is facing bankruptcy and listed as high risk debt distress. He said SLPP was expected to deliver, but they are still crying like babies, relative to economic challenges. He referred to the C4C Leader who spoke about the investment of large mining companies, but their operations he said are not reflecting on the

people. He blamed the government for environmental degradation and advised that them to do something about it. For the National Census, he said the data is not going to be credible, because according to him, the process ended badly, blaming Statistics Sierra Leone. "The midterm census was made for population and housing" he stated. He said since the President is expecting credible data in his speech, Parliament would not accept bad data. He informed that the speechwriters were not doing justice to the President, relating it to repetition and number of pages. Also blamed the head of MDAs for deceiving the President; adding that they would invite them to Parliament for questioning on information gathering for the President's speech. He expressed concerns over the electricity blackout in Freetown; adding that, nothing has been added to the generation of electricity. According to him, they don't criticize, but proffer solutions on the motion of thanks. He said they would applaud the efforts being made by the government and noted that, several excuses should stop.

The government budget, he said is very beautiful on paper, but is not practical and things are very difficult. He also said the Free Healthcare started by the previous administration; adding that the platform set for Ebola by the previous administration was what the government used to fight COVID-19, He said food security has never been prioritized. He used the opportunity to ask the government to subsidize agriculture. He urged the government to leave positive legacies. He expressed concerns that since the Bank Governor came into office, the economy has been sinking asking the House to question the latter on how the five hundred billion was spent. He said the President talked about human rights, Food Security, and housing as all tenants of human rights, blaming the police for not helping the situation in that direction. He blamed the government for the removal of MPs and stated that it was unconstitutional. While contradicting the previous debater, he said the government removed his security of former Vice President and went on to say he is being treated like a stranger.

For the millennium Compact Cooperation Fund (MCCF), he spoke on the effort of continuity and asked all and sundry to do the right thing that would help the country to gain more marks.

He expressed shock over the fight against corruption without mentioning the Auditor General and said her investigation required expedition as the office is very sensitive. He mentioned other related matters of justice that are being delayed. He recalled proactive action against drug abuse and how they are transported internationally, affecting the image of the country. He applauded the abolition of the death penalty.

According to him, they desired to construct a new airport at Mamamah instead of the terminal at Lungi International Airport, comparing the cost and accessibility but said everything was politicized.

Speaking on the increase in price of petroleum products, he comparatively informed that, the price is too high in Sierra Leone.

He informed that, if the government intends to bring the district block or PR system, one year towards the election that would not tell well and without two-third votes of MPs or referendum and wider consultation, the government would not achieve that.

He called on the House and entire leadership to look into all outstanding human rights issues and went on to mention election-related matters.

In concluding the debate, Leader of Government Business Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma spoke about national unity collaboration, development, environmental protection, and a host of other developments. He recalled how President Bio laid his life as a military to transform the nation into democracy. He decried the previous administrations of Late President Stevens, Momoh, and former President Koroma for dividing the country on tribalism and regionalism lines and commended President Bio for driving the state on development initiatives. Speaking on the economy, he informed that President Bio has been very honest with the economic management in tandem with all challenges including the global pandemic. Described the President with a vision that is focused, citing the projection analysis with financial indicators geared towards development, economic management, and road construction, and went on to decry the Previous government for bad governance. He expressed that, President Bio is very honest and recalled the national microfinance, benefiting many compatriots (Munafa) without politics. According to him, the Munafa fund is intended to cushion inflation and create wealth for the people.

He spoke about the electronic revenue generation machines which are progressive and spoke about the wage bill, he explained the reason for trying to ensure proper sanitation through salary harmonization and recruitment of more workers. He comparatively referred to the previous speeches and informed that they were very consistent in policy drive, and debt service payment adding that, i inherited huge debt from the previous administration. The education he said is a reality for human capital development and key for development, asking all and sundry not to politicize it. According to him, the government placed enough allocation of the resources to education amounting to 22% of the national budget giving positive indicators. The Leader said the government is fighting to improve gender priorities and women empowerment through education, and inclusivity among others. He advised colleague MPs to collectively support gender equality matters and other related legislations and policies. He blamed all and for treating agriculture with levity, requesting collaborative support, and inclusivity, and spoke about food security. He spoke about the efforts applied by government to cushion various agricultural projects at Tomambu, Port Loko, and other areas; and underscored aquaculture and fisheries.

He said the politicians should not take ownership of the Auditor General's Report, they should try to disassociate themselves from it and allow investigation of the vote controllers. He saluted the health workers in their efforts to fight COVID-19 and alluded to the collaborative support of all, informing that MPs must have an insurance scheme. He also highlighted government efforts in the fight against Malaria and encouraged the private sector to surmount the challenges.

For infrastructural development, he said the government is doing some projects in the health sector and another areas, improvement of the justice system. recalling the Genesis of removal of MPs and removal of their immunity by the previous government that has reoccurred today and advised all to enhance the dignity of MPs. For political stability, he said they should not use inventive language to gain power.

He highlighted all government projects including roads, accommodation, electrification, Free Quality Education, bridges, scholarship to sciences, and qualifications of Leone Star to the African Nations Cup amongst others.

He assured that they would use the opportunity of oneness and ask all to come together and develop the nation.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department
Parliament of Sierra Leone
+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776