



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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4th November, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



FIRST ALLOTTED DAY:

PARLIAMENT COMMENCES DEBATE ON PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Parliament of Sierra Leone started a Motion of Thanks to President Bio on Monday, 04/11/2024, for the speech he so graciously delivered on the Occasion of the State Opening of the Second Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of the Parliament Building on Tuesday, August 6th, 2024.

Moving the motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma, related his debate to the assessment of National Unity amongst citizens, including Members of Parliament. He underscored governance and politics in light of upholding the nation's unity. 'Let us criticize and proffer a solution' he stated. He reflected on several positive transformations of the President in promoting democracy, peace, and security. He emphasized the promotion of National Cohesion, spoke about improving policy formulation, and warned against incessant global challenges.

The Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business advised Members of Parliament to take a new trajectory, accept positive criticism, and unite to promote State Governance. Hon. Nyuma emphasized food availability and vehemently called for a collaborative effort to enhance productivity. He alluded to the Government's modus operandi in that direction to achieving Feed 'Salone'.

The Majority Leader underscored that Women's participation and representation in governance is a laudable initiative implemented by President Bio with the support of parliamentary legislation. He referred to education as very pivotal in the current Human Development in tandem with job creation

as enshrined in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone: "Education is human rights and opportunity for all." He acknowledged the many challenges in the health sector but assured the government would provide a lasting remedy to the health sector. He added that the President of the Bio Administration has employed more healthcare workers to improve the health sector. He continued that massive refurbishment of Healthcare facilities across the territorial enclave of Sierra Leone is ongoing.

He also recalled the national fight against Ebola and COVID-19. He mentioned the 500,000 jobs created by the government in tandem with youth empowerment and noted that nation-building is like a pyramid. Therefore, he called on the opposition not to decry those youth engaged in car wash activities.

Hon. Nyuma acknowledged the government's laudable moves in providing a better structure for Migrant workers outside Sierra Leone's jurisdiction. He assured the opposition that the government is very open to seeking the interests of Migrant Workers. He called for improving rural livelihood support for those living in the hinterland. He acknowledged the Human Capacity Challenge in the Energy Sector and called for reforms in the sector. Hon. Nyuma appraised the installation of a mini Grid of Solar energy in major chiefdoms across the country.

He spoke about improving cyber security, especially by implementing legislation in other areas. Hon. Nyuma advocated for reform provisions to eradicate advantages in the work environment. He lauded the improvement in Budget allocation and revenue mobilization in line with economic growth. He revealed that they won the MCC by passing corruption also spoke about.

Seconding the motion, Hon. Neneh Lebbie predicated her debate on peace. She thanked President Bio and noted that he is a very honest man for stating in the document exactly what he has done. She said there is an improvement in electricity and asked colleagues to promote the Feed 'Salone.' "Let us be very serious as Sierra Leoneans to feed ourselves," she emphatically urged. She noted that Feed Salone is very important. The MP spoke about the positive impact of Free Quality Education. She lauded the creation of space for women's participation and representation in governance and expressed optimism for further improvement.

She used the opportunity to appeal to Parliament to eradicate the use of plastic, adding that it is affecting marine species. The MP denounced unplanned construction in Freetown and called on the Ministry of Country Planning to do what is necessary.

Hon. Dr. Unpha G. Koroma from Western Area said they were impressed by the President's introduction and statement. He reflected on the 2023 elections and post activities but expressed concerns about some resolutions in the tripartite Report that had not been met. He decried the increment in taxes on rice, adding that it is illogical for Sierra Leone, one of the countries with a high hunger rate, to increase more taxes on rice. He called for human capital development and training of young people. He said as an Opposition and Government in waiting, they would continue to hold the government accountable to its mandates. He said the APC reduction in mortality rate far superseded the SLPP. He added that most of the projects the SLPP government is vociferous about were inherited from the APC government.

For his part, Hon. Papa Bangura expressed a series of concerns, including the Government discontinuity of the Mammah Projects, price increments in electricity tariffs, and bags of rice, amongst others.

Hon. Ing. Fallah Tengbeh from Kailahun District said the President is the epitome of progress and development in Sierra Leone, with a wealth of experience. The MP recalled the bad governance of the former government and analogously asserted that electricity between the past and current government is a vast mismatch, taking into consideration that the current regime had invested so much to boost the energy sector.

He highlighted development in road construction, airports, bridges, and the growth of the blue economy, including the curtain in illegal fishing, amongst other things. He lauded the Feed Salone and productivity.

Hon. Daniel Amadu Bangura from Tonkolili District denounced earlier debaters on the ruling benches and said that currently, there is no austerity but huge inflation. He decried the government for not being able to fulfill a lot of promises. The MP went on to blame the government for the current economic situation. Youth unemployment is a very frustrating issue and action must be taken.

Hon. Joseph Williams-Lamin from Bo District described President Bio as a gentleman focused on and determined to help Sierra Leone. He denounced previous debaters for negatively misinforming the public and went on to clarify. While decrying the opposition for a negative statement, he informed Parliament that taxation was essential for national growth. He advised colleague MPs to be constructive in their debate and went on to commend the Government for rapid improvement in university education in many parts of the country. He also heaped praise on the government for the Students Loan Scheme.

Hon Ibrahim Barrie from Bombali District, while decrying the government for its unfulfilled promises, also informed that the time was unfavourable. Making reference to the President's 2018 manifesto, he denounced the government for not managing food security. He spoke about joblessness and drug abuse, amongst others, that must be urgently addressed. He emphatically decried the government for the current drug situation, which has many victims.

Hon. Kankofa Farah Mansaray, from Koinadudu District, expressed elation over the wonderful speech delivered by the President. He lauded the government's effort for boosting agriculture. He called on MPs to support the government in the feed salone initiative. The MP also lauded the loan support that the government is providing for locals in rural areas. He also commended government efforts to promote electricity in rural areas. He mentioned five major towns with electricity, including Kabala. He also lauded the government's improvement of public infrastructure.

Hon. Mabinty Taylor Bangura from Kambia District expressed thanks to the President for such a brief statement. She decried the 'Feed Salone' priority project for not creating a positive impact in the country. She considered the statement made by the President as a gimmick relative to the skyrocketing price of rice. She mentioned the Torma Bum Rice project, which is also staggering, to make the anticipated bumper harvest. The MP from Kambia disclosed that even though the prices of local food companies are high, Feed Salon is a scam. She used the platform to ask the government to declare a State of Public Hunger Emergency. She said the government lacks the gumption to implement national infrastructural development. She called for the eradication in order to protect the youth.

Hon. Musa Lahai from Kailahun District predicated his debate on the country's transformations towards the provisions of safe drinking water and the gains made by Government in that direction.

Amidst the global economy downturn he, however, assured that the government had made steady progress to cushion the country's economy.

He also noted that Guma Valley Water Company is implementing a laudable project to provide water facilities across Freetown. He alluded that Sierra Leone Water Company (SALWACO) and other partners are implementing tremendous pipe-borne water projects in many communities and intensifying electricity nationwide. He concluded by thanking President Bio for his visionary leadership for the nation.

Hon. Alpha Jalloh from Falaba District referenced paragraph 23 of the President's Speech, which talks about the boost of Agriculture, and said that after seven years, President Bio's Administration has not addressed Food Security. He added that Food insecurity remains 82% and 127 on the Global Hunger Index. According to him, the country was better in the Global Hunger Index than the terrible performance of the Bio Administration. He also disclosed that the President had failed to uphold the promise of the Maputo Protocol towards boosting agriculture.

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