



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



FIRST ALLOTTED DAY:

PARLIAMENT DEBATES 2025 NATIONAL BUDGET

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Thursday 21/11/2024 commenced debate on the Bill entitled; "The National Budget 2025 or "The Appropriation Act 2025", for financial services of Sierra Leone, on the theme; "Improving the Well-being and Quality of Life of Sierra Leoneans".

The Bill seeks to authorise expenditure from the consolidated fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the year 2025 and for other related matters.

Commencing the Debate, the Chairman of Finance Committee, Hon. Francis Amara Kai-Samba from Kenema District, thanked the Ministry of Finance and others for putting the document together. He applauded the Ministry for stabilizing the Financial Year 2024 and commended the National Revenue Authority (NRA) for exceeding their targets in tandem with economic growth. The Chairman explained some of the merits of the 2025 Budget. "We are having a larger economy now", he maintained. He spoke about the Government priority projects including agriculture in light of economic growth. He recalled on several failed agricultural projects by previous governments and expressed that it was timely for the nation especially the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to ensure successes in the Year 2025. He informed the House about some improvement in rice production and reduction in cost in Tonkolili District all as a result of Government effort. He continued that Large scale agriculture and diversification would remedy the problem.

The Chairman spoke positively about the commitment of Government on education, road construction, decentralization of universities, energy expansion, water resources and employment especially among youth. He noted that there are risks attached to the budget especially global

phenomenal and assured the House that issues relating to local matters would be addressed in the country. He also warned the Ministry of Finance to make prompt disbursement of the Budget to some Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to their targets. He described the Budget as a fine document especially for the increment of salaries, recruitment amongst others.

On his part, Hon. Sallieu Osman Sesay from Bombali District described the document as a life wire and predicated on the statement of previous debater and decried in some areas. He denounced the Government for not constructing roads in the Northern Region and made specific reference to the Makama Regional Referral Hospital Road in Makeni City. He suggested to the Government to allocate more money to agriculture as a flagship project. The MP said the Government failure to implement policies is aggravating the economic situation.

The MP predicated his debate on the suffering of the people and also denounced the GDP of the Government and added that the change of the National currencies also had some implementation on the economy. He decried the Government failure to spending loan or grants on capital projects adding that this is causing adverse effects on the current economy. He exposed the the skyrocketing price of goods and the devalue of the Leones. "Let us try our best and do the right thing for our people", he stated and went on to decry politics in the implementation of policies. He emphatically blamed Government for huge wage bill, inflation and informed the House that domestic borrowing is creating more problems. He urged the Government to look into fiscal and economic policies, in light of the implementation of the 2025 Budget. The MP attributed and renamed the budget as "Kush Budget" and went on to say that the economy is dying slowly like a kush drug addict.

He categorically stated that Sierra Leone poverty ranking is increasing and advised the Government to strengthen the domestic revenue mobilization and also asked the Government to stop the leakages in Revenue collections to maintain the economic. He also advised the Government to be fair with the poor in the purchase of electricity tariff and similarly for the Ministry of Finance to change the narrative in the allocation of budget to smaller MDAs.

Hon. Musa Moigua from Kenema District admonished colleague MPs to treat the debate with seriousness. He used the opportunity and on behalf of his people to thank the Ministry of Finance and stated that the document is achievable and went to reflect on the performance of the 2024 Budget, in light of growth and development including school feeding programme. With reference to the theme of the Budget, the MP pointed out that the Government priority projects gear towards improving the livelihood of the people. He limited his debate to the importance of GDP with comparative analyzes. The Finance Act 2025 he said had no tax increment but compliance adding that this would improve the lives of the citizens.

Hon. Rosy R. Kanu from the Western Area Urban, said there are lot of challenges in distribution and accessibility of school learning materials. The Member of Parliament highlighted the huge challenges involved in providing school learning materials.

Hon. Rosy Kanu called on the Government to do more in the areas of training and capacity building for teachers, in order to provide quality learning.

On gender base violence, she called on the Government to do more and not to do lip service on the concept of gender base violence.

"As a nation, due to the low budget allocated to the Ministry of Social Welfare ,this show that to tackle kush is far from reality ", she said and concluded by calling on the Government to construct township roads in her district, Allen town and it environs.

Hon. Amara Momoh Kargbo from Western Area Rural District commended the construction of health facilities in the rural district and called on the Minister of Health to address the lack of ambulances system in the area.

He outlined the achievements of President Bio in the socio-economic development of the State. He commended the electricity sector for providing light for the nation and called on Government to improve on budgetary allocation to the fishery sector, considering the visibility of the sector.

Hon. Mohamed Sheridan Kamara from Kambia District presented his debate on the wage bill and reiterated that the 40% of revenue mobilization meant to coughing the wage bill. He highlighted the negativity of the wage bill and called for measures to addressing the concept.

"The wage bill is bloated for the unwarranted establishment of new offices and appointments", he maintained.

He said the distribution of resources to the three organ of governments is unfair, considering the budget allocation to judiciary as minimal.

Hon. Umu Pyne from Moyamba District predicated her debate on primary health care relative to budget increment from 7% to 9% in that direction and went on to speak about government's focus on the entire health system with reference to 1991 Constitution. She reiterated and outlined several budgetary allocations to other health sector. She also alluded to partners' laudable efforts to the Ministry of Health and recalled comparatively the increment of Primary Health Units (PHU's) and reduction in infant and maternal mortality rate relative to rapid improvement. She added that the 2025 budget spoke to the improvement of district hospitals including Moyamba.

Hon. Jawah Sesay from Tonkolil, rhetorical asked if Tonkolili is not part of Sierra Leone and went to highlight the district allocation contributions to enhance development. He said there is not absolute measure in the budget for that district. He also recalled on the Presidential Address that the district was not captured in terms of development. He emphasized that Tonkolili had been supportive politically and economically to this document but it's roads are deplorable, inadequate health centers. He commended Leone Rock Mining Company for complying with the Corporate Social Responsibility. He however noted that their Developments are nothing to write homes about. For allocation to education, he appealed to the Government to improve on education in that district. He

thanked the Ministry of Finance for the 25,% increment on pension.

Hon. Musa Lahai from Kailahun District described the Budget as the Citizen Center Budget and acknowledged that the budget gears towards improving the lives of the people. He underscored the increase in trend with rapid growth and development. According to him, inflation would reduce drastically. He said new recruitment portion to dependency ratio would engender many benefits. In the informal sector, he noted that the GDP would also improve and inflation would decline to a single digit. He also pointed out several increment in salaries especially for the security sector. There is a declined in the importation of food from other countries.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara from Port Loko District said like other district, they are crying. He decried and raised concern over slippages or policy slippages and advised the Government to stop them. The impact on the reduction of inflation the MP said is not reflecting on the ordinary man. He requested for the estimate of the Budget and raised concern over the actuals on specific vote heads and sub votes in light of variance in budgetary allocations or actuals. He said the budget relies hugely on domestic revenue mobilization. The MP denounced the Government reliance on taxation. The contribution of State own enterprises to the Budget he said is critical and advanced the promotion of economic diversification.

Hon. Sylvester Boima from Moyamba District thanked the Government and the Ministry for putting together very important document. He decried the previous debater for decrying Government of partial development in the North and highlighted barrage of developments promoted by this government in that areas. He spoke about the recruitment of citizens including military and other sector as stated in the 2024 financial Year. Feed Salone the MP said the President assured that he is going to treat it as priority project.

He outlined the establishment of factories in many parts on the country through Government efforts. He added that the above are synonymous with a responsible government in tandem with recruitment of more compatriots.

Hon. Mohamed Kargbo from Karene District said the diversification of the economy is noting to write home about and went on to decry the slow pace of agricultural productivity. He said the days of austerity is far better than the current Government.

He said the kamakwai Road is not position in the budget and went on to highlight the advantages of the Kamakwie road for linking neighboring countries for development.

On his part, Hon.Alpha Jalloh from Falaba District pinpointed his submission on the GDP relatively to the statistic and data of the country's population. He decried the Government of the growth of economy. The Member of Parliament called on the Government to make more budgetary allocations for the road linking Kabala to Falaba District. He called on SALWCO to ensure that a project that was gearing towards water supply to Musaia in the Falaba District be completed.

Hon. Mariama Zombo from Pujehun District in her contribution to the debate, said climate change had to be regulated and addressed. She also called for the review of the Forestry Acts. The MP spoke well on the mitigation of climate change and narrated the significant benefits the country would derive.

Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi denounced previous debaters for negative statements and advised the Ministry of Finance to support Tourism, Relics, Fisheries, Foreign Mission Abroad amongst others. She informed the House about the improvement of education, especially for girls and added that more money is required to maintain same. She also raised concern over the attitude of teachers and suggested disciplinary measures. Hon. Tongi also underscored the decentralization of civil service training college in the provincial cities. She said many people are supporting Government in the construction of Health care centers and called on the Ministry to encourage Government to acknowledge their efforts in that direction.

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