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PRESS RELEASE

FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY:

PARLIAMENT CONTINUES THE DEBATE ON THE 2023 BUDGET

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 1/12/2023 continued debate on the 2023 National Budget as was presented by the Minister of Finance, Dr. Denis K. Vandy

The Bill seeks to authorize expenditure from the consolidated fund for the services of Sierra Leone for the year 2023 and other related matters, with the theme: "Addressing the needs of the vulnerable in the context of multiple crises".

Hon. Dr. Mark Mahmoud Kaloko, while debunking previous debaters comparatively analyzed the GDP of the previous Government to the current administration and decried the latter for economic hardship and inflation. He made serious corruption allegation on various budget profiles including roads re-gravelly, Port Authority, Commissions of Inquiry (COI) 2023, and went on to say that, the budget allocation to education is misleading and is not 22%, but 15%, in light of subtraction of wages and salaries. He raised concern over special warrants of imprest to the President and decried the Ministry of Finance for poor allocation to service institutions. "This Budget deviated from the traditional norms" he concluded.

Hon. Sahr Juana heaped praises on the Government for economic revitalization through the budget of the current administration and described it as uncontroversial. He stated that, it is only the lunatic that would decry the 2023 Government's Budget and debunked a certain MP who had earlier denounced the Budget. The MP spoke

about the improvement in construction including the Koidu-Kailahun Road and appealed to the Minister to increase allocation to the Office of National Security.

Hon. Dr. Bum Kamara expressed thanks to all those who made various contributions to the budget document. He said the Budget seems to have a repetitive measure of Ukraine-Russia War and informed that, the Budget has a lot of inconsistencies that predicate on either improvement or no improvement. He denounced misleading subsidies, relative to incoherence. He advised the Government on the increased Wage Bill and asked the Finance Minister to bring strategies and policies that would ameliorate the economic situation. He shared his knowledge on how to address the budget deficit and improve on diversification.

Hon. Foday Mario Kamara said he has never condemned good documents, adding that the literature of the Bill is good, but criticized the Ministry of Finance for not fulfilling budgetary allocation to certain MDAs. The MP blamed the Minister for the continuous failure of the economy and advised the latter to change the modus Operandi. He decried the Government for creating more embassies in light of the high Wage Bill and economic downturn.

Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi predicated her debate on food security and informed that the economy of Sierra Leone was comparatively better than neighboring countries. She emphasized and appealed to colleague MPs to support the Government to farm, in order to boost the economy. She heaped praises on the Government, especially for education, rural electrification, and road construction.

Contributing to the debate, Hon. Mustapha Sellu denounced previous debaters for decrying the Government for the Wage Bill, adding the massive employment of compatriots is what others are criticizing. He spoke positively about debt servicing, payment of salaries on time, and clarified allocation to some MDAs as necessary and went on to say, the contingency impress and warrant to the Office of the President are prudent. He also clarified why allocation is made to the (COI) and set several other records straight, relative to economic growth.

Hon. Alimamy Brun Kanu commended the Minister and informed that the ruling bench should consider the piece of advice advanced by the opposition on the Budget. He informed that, some of the previous budget promises were not fulfilled, relative to road construction, education, and school feeding. He also advised the Government to forecast unforeseen circumstances and do the needful.

Hon. Boston Munda recalled the economic booming days of the past Government and denounced them for mismanagement. He catalogued the good leadership of the current Government and outlined several achievements. He blamed the past regime for corruption, causing a loss of donor confidence adding that, the current administration had restored it. He commended the Government for digital transformation and education. "This Budget is a rescue plan" and called on all to support it.

While making his maiden speech Hon. Jawah Sesay said his constituency is immensely contributing to the GDP of the nation, but they are not benefiting from the development programmes. According to him, the deplorable road network is causing more hardship on his people. Also, the MP disclosed that, they have few health facilities that cannot address the problems. He informed Parliament that, Injustice and insecurity were common and the Government was doing poorly in that area. He said his people have not benefited from the Government since 2018 and they are dying as a result of inadequate health services.

Hon. Wuyata Songa advised colleague MPs not to associate politics with the Budget and denounced the past Government for not paying gratuities to many compatriots, adding the Wage Bill is high, because of more recruitments and payment of gratuities by current administration. She appealed to colleague MPs to address problems on essential service areas, during the course of appropriation Committees. She asked MPs to address mental health issues and support more budgetary allocations in that direction. She encouraged colleague MPs to support farming and look at the Budget for the gender area. She advised Members of Parliament to look at the Budget and do the needful for the development of the State.

Hon. Moses Jokie said the Tomabum Rice project, when actualized to its fullest capacity would enhance food self-sufficient for the country. For the health sector, he catalogued praises on the Government for the infrastructural development of hospitals and Peripheral Health Units around the country.

Hon. Alhadi Lihadi

said some schools in his constituency are not benefiting from free quality education, adding that lack of pipe-borne water supply and youth employment are major problems for his constituents.

Hon. Ibrahim Alieu Sesay predicated his contributions on the needs of vulnerable people and added that, the budget outlined issues affecting the Global economy and climate change. He said the supply chain in the business line has affected the growth of the economy and went on to inform that, Government had reduced subsidies on food commodities to allviate the suffering of the people. He underscored the mitigating measures that are intended to address the welfare of the State. .

Hon. Alusine Bash Kamara in his contributions decried the Government for not supporting roads linking to his constituency, Gbinti in the Karene District .He pleaded with the Government to see the need to develop Karene District with improved road network. He commended the development partners for supporting the constructing of a bridge at the ferry crossing point in the Karena District.

Hon. Mohamed Biloh Shaw while commending the Government for the Free Quality Education told Parliament that, other countries are now studying the positive initiative, in order to apply it in their countries. He disclosed that accessibility of Free Quality Education and centers have increased drastically in his Falaba District and Government had recruited teachers.

Hon. Joseph Bash Kamara said the Government had put remedial measures to address the economic growth of the economy and went on to call on his colleagues to do justice to the budget. He described the Budget as a "remedial budget".

Hon. Abdul Titus Kamara said most of the policies stated in the previous budgets were not fairly met, adding that agriculture is a measure for economic growth. He called on the Government to provide rice seeds in time because it is time bond." Let's don't politicize agriculture, give the seeds and fertilizers to the right people", he advised. On the energy sector, he asked for the proper implementation of the light facilities in Kambia district.

Hon. Josephine Makieu praised the implementation in the Health Sector and other related economic projects.

She commended the President and his team for developing the Health Sector.

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