



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | admin@parliament.gov.sl | www.parliament.gov.sl

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PRESS RELEASES



FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON THE THE 2024 BUDGET

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Friday, 24/11/2023 continued debate on the Bill entitled; "Appropriation Act, 2024"(National Budget) for the development of Sierra Leone, on the theme "Restoring Macroeconomic Stability While Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable".

The Bill seeks to provide an authorized expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the Services of Sierra Leone for the year 2024 and other related matters.

Continuing the debate, Hon. Alice Kumabeh from Bonthe district thanked the Finance Minister and team and informed the House that the Government has made tremendous contributions towards the construction of roads and outlined some of the projects. She implored the Government and donor partners to consider the construction of certain road in the Bonthe District.

Hon. Abdul Latif Sesay from Port Loko said the theme of the budget was deceptive, relative to the increment of taxation. He suggested to the Government to diversify the economy, to yield growth and went on to highlight the various potential sectors including agriculture, tourism, and culture. He underscored the promotion of state-owned enterprises and decried the Government for the mismanagement of the same. The MP asked the Government to construct the Karena district major road.

Hon. Mohamed T. Fofana from Kambia said continuity is good, but President Bio inherited a battered economy from the APC and recalled the debt waiver under the purview of the Late President Kabbah. The MP heaped praises on President Bio for progressively thriving and denounced the APC for the mismanagement of the economy. He thanked President Bio for

implementing priority projects including Free Quality Education. He explained the necessity of tax increment with justification.

Hon. Mohamed S. Kamara from Kambia recalled the patriotic statement of the Speaker on the primary responsibility of MPs and dilated on oversight in light of checks and balances. He expressed dismay over praised singing and decried the Government on the deplorable conditions of certain roads in the Kambia district and also denounced the imposition and increment of taxation.

Hon. Alice B. Sandy Esq. from Kenema District said under this dispensation there has been an effective premier league, rehabilitation of the National Stadium, and the appointment of a female sports Minister. She underscored the establishment of streetlights along the streets of Freetown. The MP commended the Government for the enactment of the Gender Bill that had ushered in 42 female MPs to Parliament and went on to acknowledge the tremendous work of His Excellency in the development of the State.

Hon Alpha B. Mansary from Moyamba said the Opposition APC is ready to support the Government for the development of the State if they trend on due diligence.

He said the budget is a mere proposal and asked the Government to support the Community Health Facilities to reduce maternal-related issues.

On Ambulance services, he recommended that maintenance be instituted for those vehicles and called for the construction of major roads in the Moyamba district.

Hon. Ibrahim Kabba from the Western Area Rural said the President's speech is like the budget speech and acknowledged the importance of the budget. He said the budget made several provisions for the fishery sector and went on to compare past budgets for the same sector.

He referred to the budget as a "fisherman's friend". The MP acknowledged the support of Free Quality Education.

In terms of achievement of the tourism sector, he pleaded for road construction leading to the tourist attraction centers.

Hon. Mohamed Sheriff Kargbo from Karene District said the budget is nothing to write home about and referred to it as null and void. He called on all to support the health sector as well as road construction projects in the Karene district. He pleaded for the construction of the Makeni/Madina Wala Road for international trade between Sierra Leone via Guinea to Mali.

Hon. Fatmata Sarah Soukenah from Western Area Urban commended the Ministry of Finance and reassured the House that President Bio will promote the budget implementation and transform the Country. She advised colleague MPs of the opposition to stop negative criticism of the President and advanced Biblical references. "There are schools, and there is energy all over the country" she applauded.

Hon. Dr. Unpha Sorie Koroma from Western Area Urban decried the previous speaker and informed the House that budgets presented by the current Government are always contrary to their actions and went on to outline the hike in inflation, relative to the suffering of the masses. The MP raised concern over a certain Act used by the Finance Ministry. The MP questioned whether the

Government would be able to implement Feed Salone and highlighted the missing gaps including low percent budget allocation to agriculture and health. He emphasized that the Government was not supposed to increase Taxation.

Hon. Alie Bayoh from Kenema district described the budget as an important document and clarified certain issues raised by the previous speaker on diversity In the price of rice. The MP stressed the spillover of the global economy into Sierra Leone and advised colleague MPs to proffer solutions during their debate. He underscored the necessity of service delivery and performance.

Hon. Hamidu H. Mansaray from Koinadugu District informed the House about a imminent rise in fuel prices and the perpetual increase in the price of rice since 2018. The MP informed the House about the agricultural potential of Koinadugu and explained the deplorable state of the Makeni/Kabala Highway. He said with the increment of tax, life is going to be difficult and also informed the House that the Government has abandoned his people.

Hon. Sia Mahawa H. Tommy from Kono gave accolades to the Minister of Finance and informed colleague MPs that despite the global economic challenges, the Government is doing well. She heaped praises on the Government Cash Transfer to poor households and lauded youth empowerment by the President. She outlined the relevance of the Five Big Changers regarding youth employment. The MP amplified the rhetorical statement of President Bio "APC nor good for den sef and fo de country" and justified it with the closure of many employable enterprises including the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board (SLPMB), by Late President Stevens. She denounced previous speakers and tried to highlight tangible development projects done by the Government in Kono.

Hon. Daniel Fornah from Tonkolili District denounced the immediate debater on the closure of SLPMB and used the opportunity to send a message to President Bio that his people are tired of buying a bag of rice at skyrocketing prices. He stressed on the strategic location of Tonkolili and the unfair distribution of road projects for the same. He decried the tax increment and the lack of efficiency of the Government on revenue mobilization, referring to import duty and others. He expressed dismay over the huge allocation of budget to the Office of the Chief Minister against important projects.

Hon. Rtd. Captain Sylvester A. M. Boima from Moyamba said it was APC Siaka Stevens who looted the SLPMB and advanced reasons for the increment of the Wage Bill. The MP made comparisons of the taxation of rice to other countries and recalled the mismanagement of the then APC Government. He reiterated the Government employment progress. "The APC are the rice importers in this Country" he alleged.

Hon. Jawah Sesay from Tonkolili district said the APC party has never produced a failed president and justified reasons. He outlined his district contributions to the State, but according to him, they are not considered properly in the budget, especially for road construction projects. The MP said his area has not benefited from the Government since 2018. He informed the House that a certain chiefdom still exists without a Paramount Chief.

Hon. Umu Pyne from Moyamba District decried the APC for not performing during their 11-year rule and alluded to the efforts of the Government on health and educational developments. The MP

commended the Government for human capacity building. She highlighted with evidence the educational landmarks of the Government.

Hon. Aminata Sesay from Port Loko district stated that the budget document would only be important, if they were allowed to make recommendations. She stressed on equal distribution of budgeting allocation across the Country and asked colleague MPs to sincerely speak for the people and not to deceive them. The MP underscored the provision of equipment and expertise to hospitals and decried the imposition and increment of taxation. She decried the Feed Salone initiative.

Hon. Benjamin Turay from Western Area Rura said the APC would continue to remain in opposition for failing to tell the truth and described the budget as 'the People's Document'. He highlighted the positive aspects of the budget and alluded President for providing water facilities to the Western Area, through the Office of the First Lady. According to him, the Government has constructed quality roads, and water facilities in his district. "This Government is the only Government that can rule this country," he said and underscored the progress of tourism.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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+23278495023/+23276625960/+23278426851/+23278697776