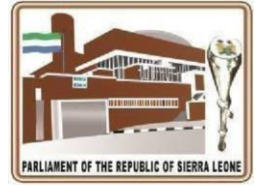




OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN



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

25th April 2023

PRESS RELEASE



MOTION OF THANKS BY THE RT. HON. DR. ABASS CHERNOR BUNDU, SPEAKER OF SIERRA LEONE PARLIAMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE DISSOLUTION OF THE 5TH PARLIAMENT OF THE 2ND REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, 25TH APRIL, 2023

Our Excellency the President of the Republic Brigadier (rtd.) Julius Maada Bio,

Hon. Vice-President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh,

Madam First Lady, Mrs. Fatima Maada Bio,

My Lord Chief Justice and other Justices of the Superior Court of Judicature,

Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Government,

Deputy Speaker, Clerk and Honourable Members of Parliament,

Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,

Media Representatives,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With deep gratitude and abiding respect, I stand before you as the Speaker of this Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone to affirm that by virtue of the provisions of subsection (1) of Section 85 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, (Act No. 6 of 1991) this Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone stands dissolved this 25th day of April 2023, being the end of its five years' tenure commencing from the date of its first sitting (25th April 2018) following the last General Elections held in 2018.

On behalf of the entire Leadership and Membership of this noble House, I wish to express our profound thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the exemplary and visionary work and leadership you have provided to our beloved country, Sierra Leone, and to this Fifth Parliament in particular over the past five years.

Mr. President,

In those five years you demonstrated that you are truly a leader like no other before you; a leader with a big heart sparkling and overflowing with vision, commitment and determination to deliver on your Manifesto promises to this nation. And to that end you have shown admirable propriety, understanding, tenderness, passion and assurance unlimited by any biases or boundaries, geographical or ethnic. Therefore, we, in this Parliament, take great pride and delight to have been part of the journey you have crafted to achieve our shared vision for this country; a vision illumined by the trending idioms of our time: "transformative development", "tangible achievements" and "radical inclusion". Transformative, because the policies and programmes of development you espouse will benefit not only our generation but also future generations and those yet unborn. And in driving forward that transformative agenda you have received accolades from the international community

projecting you as the shiniest beacon of hope for our country, for this region of Africa and even for the world at large.

Mr. President,

For these reasons and more, the Leadership and Members of this august Assembly are indeed well pleased with you and your Government, and more especially for all your accomplishments over the last five years. And because we are all so well pleased, we want to take this opportunity to express to you, your dear wife Fatima and your Government our warmest congratulations, felicitations and gratitude.

As for your accomplishments they are many, in fact just too numerous to recount. Suffice it to say here that they are now a permanent engraving on our minds to serve as a constant reminder of your indomitable courage and tenacity, and will remain so etched on my minds not only in times of peace and tranquillity but also in moments that challenge our ability and capacity as a nation, as exemplified recently by the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. President

Your tangible achievements are ubiquitous everywhere in the country, and with your dogged determination and resilience so inextricably intertwined, they give the shine and solidity to the request you have made to the people of this country to grant you a second and final constitutional mandate to enable you to complete the remainder of your Manifesto Agenda. And for that second coming, you have already signified publicly your strong desire to labour tirelessly and predominantly, this time around, in the vineyards of the country's agriculture and its related value additions until this nation of seven million people is enabled once again in its history to grow what we eat and to eat what we grow and, above all, until we are able to significantly change agriculture by lifting the calculus from being a yeoman's pastime to the high level of a thriving modern industry. This is something this nation certainly cannot wait to achieve and achieve it must.

Mr. President,

You have demonstrated yet another quality in your leadership. You do not just govern, you lead; and you are not afraid to lead. Born of sterner stuff, amazingly you are a leader who never wilts even to the fiercest wind. And in the midst of the wildest storm, no matter the threat it might pose to uprooting the foundations of our nation's peace and tranquillity, the last man standing unshaken and unafraid to lead to vanquish the storm and restore the nation's calm, will be you. But admirably you do not do it alone. You always remember that no one can achieve anything so great or so lasting all by himself. You believe in working together with other people whom you never seek to divide to achieve your aims, no matter how compelling the temptation.

Nowhere is this more true than in the relationship you cultivated and nurtured with this Fifth Parliament over the past five years; and yet, surprisingly, you have never been an elected Parliamentarian. And, today, the results of that relationship are stamped indelibly on the myriad of progressive policies and programmes that you have brought to this Fifth Parliament through your Ministers for enactment into law. And they are not just any ordinary laws; they are laws that are as ground-breaking in character and content as they are designed to withstand the test of time.

And now this Fifth Parliament would like to publicly acknowledge making possible what previously was thought to be impossible. We met no fewer than 300 times in plenary alone, not to mention Committee meetings, and some sittings lasted well into the late hours of the night; we have enacted an unprecedented number of Bills into law, totalling over 75; approved 66 Constitutional and Statutory Instruments; approved nearly 200 Loans and Grants; ratified over 60 Treaties, Conventions and Protocols; and tabled 120 Committee and Delegation Reports. None of these could have been possible without Your Excellency's support, both material and moral. And all of these achievements took place under the uneasy calm of a Hung Parliament!

Mr. President,

Against this backdrop, can anyone reasonably argue against the proposition that this Fifth Parliament – and by extension the people of this country - owe you a huge debt of gratitude? Mr. President, through your exceptional

understanding, generosity and forthrightness, the Honourable Members across the aisle of this Hung Parliament have been able to combine seamlessly among themselves and to imbibe a deeper and extraordinary sense of friendship and camaraderie so much so that effortlessly— and this is a quality seldom perceived by outsiders – they have shown greater patience, accommodation and forbearance in their dealings with one another and in discharging their duty as legislators. Today I can proudly say without hesitation that they have moulded an ethos of the Fifth Parliament as an institution that acts first as Sierra Leonean and its members are more understanding, more tolerant, wiser, stronger, wittier and more robust.

Of course, naturally, we have had our own share of rancour and aberration, most notably the most recent one of November 2022. Such, however, should not be considered unique to our Parliament; on the contrary, it is an incident inherent in the very nature of our calling as mature politicians working in an environment that is eminently democratic, and even more so in a democratic Hung Parliament. So, despite all the tribulations, we have managed to build bridges of constructive consultation, dialogue and consensus across the political divide, and of give and take between all antagonists, all pointing to the enhancement of a capacity to weather the storms of apprehension and uncertainty. And, in the process, we have come to accept our shortcomings without losing our sense of inner calm and candour, which has in effect given us greater strength, fortitude and glory. And, in some extraordinary way, we have held on firmly to the powerful words of admonishment of Hannah Webster Forster, who wrote and I quote:

“It is by surmounting difficulties, not by sinking under them, that we discover our fortitude”.

Mr. President,

Under your watch, we have benefitted also from your exceptional gift of serenity, dexterity and soft banter and through dialogue and consensus we managed to resolve so many of our differences, inspired and aided no less by our adherence to the overarching principles of national interest and the public good.

And, today, as we bring this Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic to a close, we want to take the opportunity to thank you again and to extend our best wishes as you embark upon seeking a second and final constitutional mandate as President of the Republic. We pray that the brightness of your great accomplishments light up the path to your future aspirations as we the citizenry look forward expectantly to a tomorrow paved with fulfilling dreams.

I wish to extend also our deep appreciation to our esteemed development partners who have also been part of our success story. The tireless efforts of the Parliamentary Leadership, our Members of Parliament and the Management and Staff of the Parliamentary Service also deserve fulsome praise and recognition for their hard work and patience in delivering on those actions that have made this Fifth Parliament such a responsible and resounding success.

Mr. President,

Honourable Members,

As this Fifth Parliament dissolves itself today, it marks both an end and a new beginning; it is also the official beginning of the electioneering campaign for the multi-tier Elections slated for June 24. For that campaign we ask all the political parties and their aspiring candidates and supporters to observe one mandatory injunction. Whatever the mode, whether driven by good fortune or by design, the people of this country demand that there shall be no backsliding to degenerative electioneering tactics. On the contrary, they demand a conscious and deliberate effort on the part of all to eschew violence and the threat of violence at all times before, during and after the campaign. We ask of this because there is no gainsaying the fact that peace and development are two intimate and inseparable companions; you cannot have one without the other. Besides, with the terrible experience brought by the 11-year civil war, the people of this country deserve a new life totally devoid of violence in whatever guise and they are also saying enough is enough. We must all therefore conduct ourselves in a manner that is peaceful, civilised and decorous, bearing in mind our sacred duty to uphold the Constitution of Sierra Leone and also that the rest of the world is watching.

Mr. President,

Honourable Members,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to conclude by entreating all of us in the words of John Hume:

“Difference is of the essence of humanity itself; difference should never be seen as the source of hatred or conflict. The answer to difference is to respect it. A fundamental principle of peace is respect for diversity.”

Notwithstanding its tribulations, today, Ladies and Gentlemen, we celebrate the achievements of this Fifth Parliament as much as we bid it farewell. We do so with a sense of deep reflection and humility. Going forward we should dedicate our lives to ushering in a new brighter future. Often times we are labelled the poorest of the poor; as a nation, we should see that label as a challenge to fight together to throw it away and replace it with the promise of a new world called the world of progress and development. As citizens of Sierra Leone, we must learn to work harder together regardless of our ethnic origin or political persuasion; we must resolve that no matter how arduous the task and how daunting the journey ahead, we shall all get to the promised land, the land free of want and deprivation, and we shall leave no one behind; and that land is right here in Sierra Leone. We must therefore be prepared to herald the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic to be born out of the June elections and I ask that we do so with a sense of purpose, determination and optimism. Success should be our new mantra and our sole objective, for the consequences of failure are just too grim to contemplate. The task ahead might appear to be difficult but it can never ever be greater than our collective will to succeed together.

With that, Mr. President, Distinguished Ladies, and Gentlemen, I again reaffirm that by operation of the law of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, 1991, this Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic stands dissolved.

I thank you all for your kind attention.

END

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department
Parliament of Sierra Leone
+23278495023