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5th APRIL, 2022

PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT DEBATES TABACCO, NICOTINE CONTROL ACT, 2021

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 05/04/2022 intensively debated, the Bill entitled "The Tobacco and Nicotine Act, 2021.

The Bill seeks to provide for the control and regulation of the production, manufacturing, importation, packaging and labeling, advertising, promotion and sponsorship, sale and use of tobacco, tobacco products, and other nicotine products, to provide for the improvement of public health by limiting the health harms caused by the use of, and exposure to, tobacco including nicotine, by reducing demand for tobacco and nicotine products and to provide for the incorporation of Sierra Leone's obligations under the World Health Organisation Framework Convention in Tobacco Control into domestic Law, to provide for the establishment of the Tobacco and Nicotine Control Secretariat responsible for the implementation of this Act and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the Bill to Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Princess Dugba said each year tobacco killed eight million people and caused diseases related to cancer, lungs cancer, kidney diseases, and others.

According to the Deputy Minister, Government is trying to prevent and reduces the use of tobacco and nicotine. She said tobacco-related diseases caused the Government to spend over four billion Leone yearly. According to her, the Bill has been through a nationwide consultation, in order to discuss the effect and importance of the Bill as well as the socio-economic development on the state

In his contribution to the debate, the Parliamentary Chairman of the Health and Sanitation Committee, Hon. Moses Jokie commended the government for standing tall to address the issues of tobacco smoking and highlighted the negative impacts smoking has on its users and that of the state.

On his part, Hon. Salieu Osman Sesay commended WHO and Focus-1000 for their contributions to the Bill and noted that, the enactment of the Bill would address cigarette smoking in the

country. He spoke about the increment of taxes on tobacco and highlighted that, the bill is not in any way banning the sale and importation of tobacco and nicotine in the country

Hon. Joseph William-Lamin recalled that, during the time of slavery, when tobacco was used for the exchange of a black man and went on to condemn cigarette smoking for its negative effect on humans. He pleaded for more actions to be taken to eradicate and control the tobacco system in the country

Hon. Dr. Mark Mahmud Kaloko commended the process of the Bill and outlined the statistical data on the effect of smoking.

Hon. Musa Fofanah referred to the Bill as a critical Bill that needed urgent action and commended institutions that supported the process.

Hon. Foday Mario Kamara supported the passage of the bill and highlighted its effect on the development of the country

Hon. Sahr Charles said the Board Council should champion the popularization of the Bill, when it has been enacted into law. He called for measures to be put in place to help addicted cigarette smokers with counseling.

In rounding up the debate, Opposition Leader Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah said in the pre-legislative hearings, he learned a lot about the importance of the Bill and called on those championing the Bill to provide a space for smokers and called for total support of the Bill, and requested wider consultation on the Bill

In concluding the debate, the Acting Leader of Government Business Hon. Bashiru Silikie supported the Bill, but cautioned the composition of the Board, adding that, when the Bill comes to the committee stage, it would be strictly scrutiny and commended colleague MPs for their contributions.

After an intensive debate, the Bill was committed to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny

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