



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT DEBATES THE STATE-OWNED ENTERPRISES AND GOVERNANCE ACT 2025

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Tuesday, 25/03/2025, intensely debate the Bill entitled: 'State-Owned Enterprises and Governance Act 2025'. for the progress and development of Sierra Leone.

The Bill seek, to establish the State-Owned Enterprises and Governance Act, to provide a framework for effective ownership and governance of State-Owned Enterprises, to provide for a prudent shareholder of State-Owned Enterprises on behalf of Government, to provide clear guidelines and standards to ensure transparency, accountability, and good governance in the operations of State-Owned Enterprises, to provide for better economic management, promoting fair competition and improving public trust in the government's ability to manage public resources and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the Bill, the Deputy Minister of Finance Bockarie Kalokoh said the Government of Sierra Leone owns about 24 state-owned enterprises and that despite all efforts by the government, state-owned enterprises face a lot of challenges that affect the operations of the government. He said the government has created the Bill to reform state-owned enterprises' operations. "The policy is to enhance transparency and accountability," he said. He continued that the Bill seeks to ensure efficient service delivery in Sierra Leone.

In his debate, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, Honourable France Amara Kaisamba, said state-owned enterprises are either owned or partly owned by the government. He said state-owned enterprises have been doing well in the past, but later started depreciating, which gave the government the need to privatize some entities. "To reform the state-owned enterprises is a laudable venture," he said.

Honourable Catherine Zainab Tarawallie from Bomabli District in her submission, said that State-Owned Enterprises are not taking Parliament and the people of Sierra Leone with utmost seriousness. She continued that Sierratel alone can solve most of the problems we are facing as a nation if only proper management and attention are given to it. "We cannot sit here and allow such repeal without perusing the Bill," she added that the Ministry of Finance should be able to tell Parliament the model used to sell entities owned by the Government to private individuals.

Honourable Engineer Fallah Tengbeh from Kailahun District said any functioning government would want SOEs to contribute to economic growth. He expressed dissatisfaction over the operations of State-Owned Enterprises over the years. "Our State-Owned Enterprises have not been performing," he said. Honourable Tengbeh stated that the inefficiency of SOEs led to the establishment of the National Commission for Privatization.

Contributing to the debate, the Opposition Chief Whip of Parliament, Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara, said that budget allocations to MDAs are affecting the operations and activities of MDAs. As a nation, the MP said let us ensure that institutions charged with the responsibility to generate income do so genuinely for the growth and development of the State. No matter the number of legislations made, if the nation is not ready to build on infrastructure, the institutions will find it difficult to perform well. He said that the government must provide resources for institutions, in order to operate effectively.

Rounding up the debate on the part of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Daniel Brima Koroma, said that the issue of SOEs, which the Bill seeks to address, is a matter of public interest. He asked Parliament to invite SOEs to give explanations of their ineffectiveness in the sector. He added that, regardless of countless challenges in the State-Owned Enterprises sector, there are still some success stories, referencing Sierra Leone Commercial Bank, National Petroleum, and Rokel Commercial Bank, and that Parliament should invite some of those institutions to explain their success stories for others to emulate. He ended by saying that the Bill should be sent to the Legislative Committee stage for further probing.

In rounding up the debate on the side of the Government bench, the Deputy Leader of Government Business, Honourable Saa Emerson Lamina, said that the Bill is now the property of Parliament and that Parliament has the liberty to properly scrutinize the Bill for the people of Sierra Leone. He said there is high financial instability in the Bill, which needs to be addressed by Parliament.

Referencing clause 23 of the Bill, he said the proposed legislation makes provisions for performance contracts to be made in the sector. He continued by calling on the legislative committee to properly examine the Bill to benefit the people of Sierra Leone. Responding to issues raised by Members of Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Finance 2, Bockarie Kalokoh, assured the House of proper consideration.

Using Standing Order 51(1), the Bill was sent to the Legislative Committee for thorough consideration before passing into law.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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