



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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## PRESS RELEASE



### PARLIAMENT RATIFIES \$ 480 MILLION MCC COMPACT AGREEMENT

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 15/10/2024 extensively debated and ratified with unanimity the Millennium Challenge Compact Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the United States of America and the Programme Implementation Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the United States of America.

The two agreements, championed by the Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, were unanimously approved by the Members of Parliament, following an emergency sitting convened by the President of Sierra Leone, Dr. Julius Maada Bio. He assured them that these agreements hold immense potentials for the nation, particularly in the energy sector, sparking hopes and optimisms for Sierra Leone's future.

Debating, Hon. Ibrahim Barrie said the grant is a big boost for the energy sector. He called on the government to adhere to the attached recommendations in the agreement to enhance democracy, especially for elections to be free and fair in Sierra Leone. He added that the pre-conditions attached to the Compact would help create a system for credible elections that are free from manipulations. He said the sacrifice made for democracy today was paid by thousands of soldiers who lost their lives in the course of fighting for democracy. He said the 2023 elections were a reminder for future free, fair, and credible elections. He expressed thanks and appreciation to the US Government for the MCC grants. Hon. Ibrahim Barrie alluded that the APC welcomed the MCC and expressed the belief that the MCC would remedy the issues that were needed in the nation. According to the US Ambassador, he said they are committed to supporting the MCC Compact. He expressed hope that the MCC would serve the needed expectations. He concluded by commending the government for the MCC and encouraged the government to fully implement the 84 recommendations attached to the MCC.

Hon. Hindolo Ngavao expressed elation for the MCC agreement geared towards the implementation of the MCC Compact. He said the MCC has its object, which is to reduce poverty and strengthen governance and economic freedom in Sierra Leone. He commended the people of Sierra Leone for supporting President Bio to pass the required criteria to get to the MCC threshold. He said the praises for the MCC go to Sierra Leoneans for supporting the fight against corruption. He said if the governance institutions were not good, Sierra Leone would not have been qualified for the MCC Compact. He said the appointment of Hon. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella to serve the energy sector, through the MCC grant, would be top-notch.

He said President Bio had done tremendously well in the spheres of promoting the energy sector across the country. He assured all citizens that every cent of the MCC would be monitored to ensure that the funds were used for their intended purposes.

Hon. Tamba Kellie also joined the bandwagon to thank the US Government for granting Sierra Leone the MCC. He said the grant is a laudable step for Sierra Leone. He said there is more emphasis on distribution and transmission, but nothing on generation. He also called for the capacity building of the EDSA project staff to the tune of over fifty thousand dollars. He called on the government to include energy generation in the project. He decried the colossal amount allocated to the administrative aspect of the MCC grant.

Hon. Ing. Fallah Tengbeh said it was the first time Sierra Leone had brought home such a huge amount of money through MCC grant. He called on Members of Parliament to lavish praises on President Julius Maada Bio for his good leadership. He added that the agreement is not contentious and that the goals and objectives of the agreement are very clear. He assured that there would be an increased energy supply across the country very soon. He also emphasized the need for energy generation for the country. He said the project would also install a transformer with high-security alertness, which will prevent the transformers from being vandalized. He said the MCC energy project would eradicate the low voltage problem. He called on Members of Parliament from the Opposition to support the MCC project.

Hon. Peter Yamba Koroma from Bombali said the MCC is very unprecedented for Sierra Leone, especially the 480 million dollar energy grant. He said the support of the people in terms of promoting democratic governance helped the nation to secure the grant. He said the nation needs to celebrate the MCC with caution. He said the nation should be happy because energy is a key to transformative development for a nation. The MP added that the nation should not be too happy about the dependency syndrome. He called for accountability in the project's implementation, a key condition attached to the grant. He sent a strong-worded warning that if the country did not provide accountability for the funds, the nation would fail. He concluded by encouraging all and sundry to do due diligence in implementation of the MCC.

Hon. Tamba Johnny from Kono thanked President Bio for ensuring that he provided good governance for the nation. He also thanked the US Government for allocating such a huge sum to Sierra Leone's energy sector. He assured that the project would also include energy generation for the country. He said a delegation was sent to Kenya with the aim of supporting energy generation in the country. He said Port Loko is using 2 Mega Watt of electricity during the rainy season, but that would be drastically reduced during the dry season. He said seven districts have electricity supply for the first time in Sierra Leone's history. Hon Tamba Johnny concluded by expressing thanks and appreciation to those who played a key role in securing the MCC Grant.

Hon. Alpha Bah confessed that the people truly need the MCC Grant. He also thanked the US Government for their generosity. He thanked the Government of Sierra Leone for the laudable effort in securing the MCC. He, however, questioned the instantaneous ratification of the MCC Grant. He said the mad rush for the ratification of the MCC Grant may be because of the Government's phobia regarding possible reverse if anything goes wrong along the way. He concluded with a disclaimer that if there is anything in the document, let the people of Sierra Leone forgive them. He decried spending a huge amount of the grant on transmission and not on generation. He said it is not wise to spend too much money on energy transmission and that nothing should be done about energy generation.

Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara from Kono expressed elation for the MCC and thanked the US Government for the Grant. She directed specific accolades to women, adding that gender empowerment was pivotal in securing the MCC Grant. She said the MCC Grant did not come because of the Tripartite but rather because of the fight against corruption. She continued that renewable energy had improved drastically over the years due to support from development partners. She said the MCC Grant would support the health sector, the educational sector, technology, and other areas of development. She said the MC Grant would also aid the women's business sector. She added that the MCC Grant would also help the youth economically by opening Internet facilities. She stated that the MCC did not come for SLPP or APC but for Sierra Leone.

Hon. Dr. Upha Koroma, from the Western Area, expressed elation for the MCC as over two hundred countries faced the MCC examination worldwide. He said that Sierra Leone would have graduated to a better height for securing such a grant. He said the process of graduation started when the APC first won the MCC. He made it clear that they, as MPs, were very grateful for the MCC Grant. He assured that even though Parliament would monitor the implementation of the MCC, the MCC itself had a set standard for the implementation of the Compact. He assured that the Opposition supports the MCC, adding that they are not against election reforms.

Hon. Musa Fofanah from Kono said President Bio is a very serious President, adding that the SLPP is a very serious government, especially in the area of energy generation. He said over the last five years, transformer vandalization and cable theft were a dangerous pattern weighing down on the energy sector. He said with the MCC Grant, energy supply would increase nationwide.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara from Kambia District said the country's neglect of the Bumbuna Phase Two is a very big gap for the nation's energy generation system. He appealed for the nation to look for more avenues for energy generation. He emphasized that the Bumbuna Phase Two is less costly for energy generation for the nation. He said the country had invested in energy transmission and distribution for far too long, but the problem remains the same because nothing has been done about energy generation. He called for a concerted effort to consolidate the MCC gain. He said the nation is pegged on the MCC for the country's democratic lapses. He furthered that even the basic thing to do as government had not been done. He concluded by calling on all and sundry to support the implementation of the MCC for the betterment of the nation.

Hon. Joseph Williams Lamin from Bo District said the MCC Agreement was long awaited for ratification. He said the very day he saw the Minister of Finance signing the MCC brought immense gratification to him. He said the country received 48 Million Dollars in 2014, adding that in 2024, the country received 480 million dollars of the MCC Grant. He called on everyone to expeditiously ratify the MCC agreements.

Hon. Daniel Brima Koroma, Deputy Opposition Leader from Koinadugu District, said the fight for the award of the MCC Grant started way back. He thanked the Minister of Finance and the Government of Sierra Leone for such an opportunity for the nation. He said it is only an insane person that would kick against the MCC Grant. He also thanked the US Government for the MCC Grant. He said the government needs to convince him that respect for Human Rights and the fight against corruption were the criteria for the award of the MCC Grant. The Deputy Opposition Leader decried African Leaders' banking monies in the West and for having investments in the West other than their countries. He questioned the aspect of opening a foreign account for the MCC Grant, especially when the interest would benefit the MCC, not Sierra Leone. He also decried the aspect in the agreement indicating that the assets of the MCC belong to the MCC and not Sierra Leone. He concluded by calling on the House to support the MCC agreement, noting that the MCC agreement is not for SLPP or APC but for the people of Sierra Leone.

Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina, Deputy Leader II of Government Business, said the agreements will benefit the people of Sierra Leone. He revealed that before 2018, Sierra Leone failed the MCC, which President Bio promised and had passed the MCC. He commended the Opposition for supporting the MCC. He said the Feed Salone initiative would not be actualized if the energy supply is not actualized and intensified. He added that the MCC is in alignment with the Sierra Leone Development Plan. He called on all MPs to unanimously ratify the agreements.

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, also called on the MPs to applaud the Speaker for preventing politics in the ratification of the MCC Agreement. He said 70 of the EGTC Staff are on contract. He claimed that some of the contracted staff of EGTC are responsible for the vandalization of transformers or electricity theft when they become disgruntled. He expressed dismay that the entire agreement did not mention Bumbuna. He anticipated that the agreement would be focused on developing Bumbuna. He called on the Minister to address the concerns, including managing the huge liability of EDSA and EGTC.

Hon. Abdul Kargbo, the Opposition Leader, said the MCC is for Sierra Leone and is not tied to a specific political party. He added that the MCC also aimed at alleviating extreme poverty in the nation. The Opposition Leader noted that there are preconditions for the eligibility of the MCC, and he called on the government to uphold and take those conditions into serious consideration. He added that Sierra Leone is losing tremendously from the energy sector. He called for energy generation and the government to put forward a strategy for sustained energy generation. He said that despite the grant being granted, if the government did not implement it as recommended, the MCC would terminate or suspend the grant. He reiterated this by calling on the government to fully implement the MCC's recommendations. He said despite one of the recommendations, which says that all persons arrested due to political violence should be released, he said up to now, the Government of Sierra Leone had not released any of those political prisoners. He said Resolution 4 of the Tripartite Recommendations had been delayed. The Opposition Leader called on the Speaker and the Government of Sierra Leone to work with the Opposition to meet the threshold recommendations contained in the Tripartite Report.

The Acting Leader of Government Business Hon. Bashiru Silikie, commended the role of the Opposition Party in ensuring that they worked together for the award of the MCC. He acknowledged the role of the APC Government in meeting the MCC threshold in 2014. He said that because

President Julius Maada Bio had been very adamant in the fight against corruption, the highest scorecard precipitated the 480 Million Dollars MCC Grant. He said the MCC is a very good agreement for the country. He said the agreement would encourage the parliamentary oversight committee on energy to provide adequate oversight in the implementation of the agreement. He called on all citizens to support the implementation of the MCC Grant.

In another development also ,The Parliament of Sierra Leone has commenced debate on the Bill entitled The Child Rights Act, 2024 .

The Bill however ,seeks to repeal and replace the Child Right Act,2007 (Act No.7 2007),to make provisions for the promotion Of the right and Responsibilities of children and the obligation of the State to provide for such rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Right and Welfare of Children and to Provide for other related matters.

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