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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT RATIFIES BILATERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 24/01/ 2023 debated and ratified several agreements between Sierra Leone and other countries relating to bilateral economic growth and commercial cooperation.

The following agreements were ratified by Parliament:

1. The Reciprocal promotion and protection of investment agreements between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State Of Qatar

2. Agreement on Economic, Commercial, and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State of Qatar

3. Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the State of Qatar for the Services and

4. Trade Cooperation Agreement between the Republic of the Gambia and the Republic of Sierra Leone

Presenting the agreements prior to ratification, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Madam Mamadi Gobeh Kamara recalled the official visit of President Bio to Qatar in 2018 where he signed several developmental agreements with the Government.

Madam Minister said the objective of the agreements is to expand economic growth and transportation within both nations for effective transformation of trade liberalization and went further to state that, the trade cooperation would enable both countries to share bilateral cooperation.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs said the technical and economic cooperation, when ratified would widen trade-related investments and the promotion of tourism industry

On the Air Service cooperation, she said it would enhance knowledge sharing and improve technological investment in return providing greater revenue mobilization for both nations. Madam Minister said the joint trade cooperation agreement with the Gambia would enhance trade liberation.

Making his submission to the debate, the Chief Whip of Parliament Hon. Dickson Rogers commended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for bringing these agreements to Parliament and referred to the agreements as beneficial to the people of Sierra Leone. He said all agreements brought forward to Parliament by Foreign Affairs Ministry are not controversial and requested MPs to speedily ratify the following agreements as presented.

On his part, the Hon. Dr. Mark-Mahmoud Kalokoh said the agreements before the House are not controversial, but also need some clarifications. The MP went further to request the Minister to clarify the agreement that showcases the viability between the trade cooperation for Sierra Leone and that of the Gambia.

In his contribution to the debate, the Leader of NGC Hon Dr. Kandeh Yumkella expressed appreciation over the trade agreement between the Gambia and Sierra Leone, "It is good to do trade within neighbouring countries", he said and went further to state that, it is a welcoming initiative by the government to established intercontinental trade agreements.

On the Qatar agreements, he said, it would help both nations to achieve trade activities and underscored the importance of the agreements. He also highlighted the economic growth of Qatar, relative to oil and gas supply in the world market. He said the agreements would help Sierra Leone to achieve knowledge sharing and other related economic growth.

In the tourism sector, he advised the government on the reduction of taxes on the airport, the seaport, and hotel prices, in order to attracting tourists to the country

Hon. Joseph Williams-Lamin appreciated the Gambia for their kind hospitality to Sierra Leoneans especially during the insurgency and also welcomed the trade agreement for both nations. He spoke on the benefits the trade agreements would add to both nations, when ratified

Hon. Sahr Charles said the agreements are laudable, when implemented to the letter and underscored the protections of those investing in Sierra Leone. On the Air Service agreements, he said it would help Sierra Leone attract job investment and technology transfers. He advised the House to support the improvement of the trade and tourism sector for both nations. He appreciated the agreements for the economic growth of Sierra Leone.

Leader of C4C Hon. Emerson Saa Lamina referred to the role of the President as stipulated in the 1991 constitution and commended Parliament for ratifying over four hundred agreements and conventions. He spoke on the huge benefits Sierra Leone would attain in both agreements and went further to commend the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for bringing these agreements to Parliament for ratification. The MP dilated on the

unification of religious tolerance of both Qatar and Sierra Leone. He said the trade agreements between The Gambia and Sierra Leone would boost the trade confidence of both countries.

Rounding up the debate, the Opposition Leader of Parliament, Hon. Chernor R.M. Bah joined colleagues MPs to support the ratification of both agreements and commended officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for bringing the agreements to Parliament. He said the agreements would help both nations in economic and bilateral relations relative to religious tolerance and trade investment. He commended the New Lungi Terminal Building Airport, but also decried the delay in accessing Lungi to Freetown. He said for tourism to succeed other sectors need to come on board." We should encourage more production within, it is good we trade with our neighboring countries", he said and went further to state that, growth should be improved

He said the Gambia agreement is in front of Parliament, because ECOWAS is not working, and noted that, if ECOWAS is working the Gambia agreement is not needed, "We need to work together and trade together", he concluded.

Concluding the debate, Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silkie commended the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for signing positive agreements for the People of Sierra Leone. He said the Government of President Bio is transforming international and bilateral cooperation and recalled other agreements that have been ratified by the Parliament of Sierra Leone. He spoke on the importance of the agreements towards the socioeconomic development of the State.

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