



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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9th November, 2023

PRESS RELEASES



PARLIAMENT RATIFIES KINGHO RAILWAY AND PORT AGREEMENT

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Thursday, 09/11/2023 debated and ratified railway and port agreement for the development of Sierra Leone.

The following agreement was approved by Parliament:

Railway and Port Lease Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Kingho Railway and Port Company Limited

Presenting the motion, the Minister of Transport and Aviation, Ambassador Fanday Turay said the agreement was very important. He spoke about the essence of transportation and that the railway could play a pivotal role in that direction, especially for the transportation of iron ore and agricultural wares. According to him, Kingho is a subsidiary to Leone Rock.

The Minister informed that, the agreement is in line with the government development agenda.

He highlighted the positivity of the railway and port, in light of operational activities, investment potential, human capital, revenue sharing, operational transparency and long time commitment amongst others. Multiple utilization of the railway and port by other parties was also pointed out by the Minister as an integral part of the agreement and also government regulations.

The Minister reassured that, the railway would boost the economy and develop the transport sector, as well as to create jobs. He used the opportunity to tell the Honourable House to collectively support the agreement, adding that, it would lay the foundation for railway and port in the country.

Chairman of Transport and Aviation, Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebbie expressed thanks to the Minister and team. He lauded the agreement and added that, it is in the interest of the people and emphasized that the agreement is stipulated for 20 years, with possible extension. He highlighted some of the important ingredients of the agreement including the payment of surface rent, and user parties amongst others. He also spoke about international best practices, in light of licenses and other related matters. The MP made reference to the necessity of robust oversight to ensure compliance of the company.

Deputy Leader 2 of Government Business who is also the Chairman Committee on Mines and Mineral Resources, Hon Saa Emerson Lamina said the agreement sought the interest of the State, the people and the company and underscored that it would improve the employment sector. The MP added that the agreement would promote the President's 'Feed Salone' through the transportation of food into the urban markets.

The MP spoke about the unique nature of the agreement with a 5% annual increment of payment of surface rent. "Very soon, the Northern Region would have a hub," he said and went on to say that, there is no fictitious third party in the agreement. He emphasized on the maintenance aspect of the company and its monitoring mechanism. He said the agreement is rich and would support the socio-economic agenda of President Bio. He said many good things about the company including the payment of surface rent and taxation. "This agreement would improve investors confidence" he assured. "Five thousand, two hundred Sierra Leoneans are working for the company" he revealed and informed that, the company is using the 'local local' policy, where more indigenous people are employed and went to elaborate the corporate social responsibility of the company. "The agreement is not controversial" he reiterated and encouraged his colleague MPs to quickly ratify the agreement.

Hon. Abdul Latif Sesay said the agreement is very important and thanked Kingho for the good work done. He advanced some observations and concerns about the company. He informed the House that there is a rumour around Arise IIP for the use of the same rail and port. He expressed hope that the critical Arise issue would be addressed. He supported the ratification of the agreement.

Hon. Rose Marie Bangura thanked the Minister for bringing the agreement. She commended the company for compliance and consultation. "They are a listening company and carry out their corporate social responsibility" she revealed. She expressed hope that her community would continue to benefit from the company including job creation and payment of surface rent. "This company has the potential to begin to produce iron ore" she concluded.

The Chief Whip of Parliament, Hon. Dickson Rogers described the agreement as a very rich document and informed the House that the company is going to benefit the country. He suggested to the Transport Ministry to have railway investors to establish rail facility in other districts, in order to be able to convey more goods and food items into the markets.

He spoke about possible investment drives in the transport sector and other related developments.

Hon. Dr. Unpha Sorie Koroma said the agreement is not controversial and made reference to previous mining companies. The MP used the opportunity to appeal to the company to consider Tasso Island and its surroundings. He expressed hope for the development of the transport sector and related developments.

In rounding up the debate, the Leader of the Opposition, Hon Abdul Kargbo expressed hope to have more investors in Sierra Leone and said that the lack of investment affects foreign exchange and development. The Opposition Leader said any agreement that has not been approved by Parliament is not proper and spoke about investors' confidence in the country. He said it was an embarrassment to the nation, when

the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources signed an agreement for same facility with Arise Company, calling for an investigation into the matter.

He lauded the Kingho agreement and emphasized that it was not a bad agreement. He called for proper monitoring of the railway and port for the use of other parties and to ensure proper maintenance. "We are not opponents to the development of this nation, we are proponents of the development of the nation" he stated.

In Concluding the debate, the Leader of Government Business, Hon.Mathew Sahr Nyuma thanked the opposition and clarified some issues earlier raised relating to the Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources. The Leader said his Government is in compliance with taxation and other best practices, in light of the agreement. He positively elaborated on the content of the document. "This is a very good agreement" he disclosed and calculated the surface rent amounting to USD 250,000 annually and with a 5% increment annually. He said the agreement is a very beautiful document relative to compliance with the rules of the laws.

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