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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT APPROVES FRANCIS BEN KAIFALA AS NEW ACC COMMISSIONER

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 27th June 2018 debated and approved, with some dissenting voices, the Seventh Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service (CAPS), chaired by the Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma.

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has approved Mr. Francis Ben Kaifala as the new Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

After approval and in his congratulatory remarks to Mr. Kaifala as the new Anti-Corruption Boss, the Presiding Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas “urged him to take necessary actions within two weeks against corrupt practices”.

Seconding the motion, Hon. Veronica K. Sesay of SLPP recounted a number of praises heaped on the presidential nominee by Hon. Members constituting the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service in respect of his qualification and competence; save for some administrative bottlenecks. She also referred to him as “a young man who is ripe and fit for purpose”, whilst urging the brilliant lawyer to be strong and resilient in his pursuits to hunt and halt corrupt practices in the country. She espoused that “corruption is the cankerworm that is eating deep into the developmental fabrics of Sierra Leone”. Recalling President Bio’s commitment to fight and kick corruption out of the country, she encouraged Mr. Kaifala to pursue corruption related acts by medical practitioners, the police and even Members of Parliament.

Hon. Hindolo M. Gevao of SLPP commended President Bio for nominating Mr. Kaifala whom he had known for the past ten years as “corrupt-free and apolitical”. He also said that the “nominee is over-qualified and had practiced law for over ten years unblemished, with huge managerial experience and regular payment of taxes”. He reminded “Parliament of making the laws and that its interpretative aspect is the exclusive domain of the Judiciary”, saying that “President Bio is vested with the Executive Authority to constitute offices, appoint, and terminate persons so appointed at will, and that in cases of inconsistencies, the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone takes precedence”. He also said that “Mr. Kaifala is a fearless

young man who confronts corrupt practices head-on, whilst pointing to the fact that his credentials had been acclaimed by Hon. Chernor Bah and Hon. Kandeh Yumkella respectively”.

Hon. Emilia Loloh Tongi, an Independent MP from Kailahun described Mr. Kaifala as “over-qualified” for the job. Advising the nominee in his strides against corruption, she referred to “corruption as being cancerous and incurable, but with President Bio’s prescription of fighting corruption with Mr. Kaifala, then there is light at the end of the tunnel”. She also called on the nominee to prosecute medical, police, and other forms of corruption, adding that such a fight is “dangerous and difficult at the moment”.

Hon. Quintin Salia-Konneh, another Independent MP from Kailahun said that “this is the first time Sierra Leone is having an Anti-Corruption Commissioner that is corrupt-free”, whilst encouraging MPs “to focus on country and not political parties”. Speaking on the qualification of the nominee, he called on MPs to embrace and support him to succeed in his efforts to fight corruption in the country.

The Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor Bah of APC disclaimed and disassociated the APC from the Seventh Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, describing it as “purported, inconclusive and without unanimity”. He also said that “the debate had been skewed, and that nobody is contending the capacity and competence of the nominee; save for procedural breaches”. He also said that “they are not questioning the conduct of the President and that there is no inconsistency between the ACC Act and that of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone”.

Concluding the debate, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma of SLPP and Acting Leader of Government Business said that “this is the time to fight corruption with action, rather than words”. He also described Mr. Kaifala as “corrupt-free” and furthered that his fight against corruption had begun since he became a lawyer, whilst decrying the attitude of his predecessor towards the fight against corruption. He referred to “abrogation of the law as another form of corruption, whilst citing those who had been paid from the Consolidated Revenue Fund less than a year to the conduct of General Elections”. Calling on the nominee to fight corruption as we did to Ebola, he said “administrative challenges could not bar them from presenting the nominee for approval”.

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