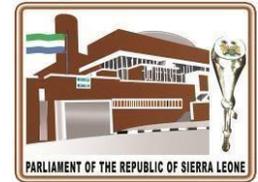




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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT CONCLUDES DEBATE ON NATIONAL BUDGET FOR 2022

Following conclusive debate on Friday 26/11/2021 on the Bill entitled: "The Appropriation Act of 2022", the Parliament of Sierra Leone has committed it to its sub-appropriation committees for the scrutiny of budgetary heads and estimates before recommending to Parliament for the approval of those budgetary heads and estimates for ministries, departments and agencies of Government to undertake development programmes in the country.

Hon. Aiah Kassegbema said the free quality education scheme should be apolitical and called for the budget to be translated into reality for the development of the country.

Hon. Lahai Marah said the Minister was honest to say some projects were yet to be completed. In respect of climate change, he called on government to discourage timber logging in the country, and called for the Ministry of Finance to be investigated on debts management and repayment. He also blamed the Ministry of Finance for expending funds without due approval by Parliament.

Speaking on macroeconomic activities in respect of trade and agriculture, Hon. Alieu Ibrahim Kamara the budget was destined to succeed, save for the intervention of COVID-19 pandemic.

Hon. Quintin Salia-Konneh praised the government for additional funding to the free quality education scheme and said the budget presented to Parliament was good for the development of the country.

Hon. PC Bai Kurr Kanagbaro Sanka III thanked MPs who spoke to the motion, and called on the Minister of Finance to address those concerns for the development of the country.

Hon. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Leader of NGC said projections in the national budget were planned expenditures for the socio-economic transformation of the country. He also spoke on climate change, debts management, disaster management and tax exemption for the good of the country. Speaking on the necessity of effective oversight, he called for debate on the reports of the Auditor General.

Hon. Abdul Kargbo also said that the Ministry of Finance had expended without approval by Parliament. He said the government had accrued huge debts amounting to millions of dollars and called for effective management of the economy.

Hon. Abdul M. Kamara called on Sierra Leoneans to join hands collectively for the development of the country and called for budgetary allocation for the management of national disaster in the country.

Hon. Catherine Zainab Tarawally said the economy was not properly managed and questioned huge allocation of funds to the Ministry of Finance at the expense of agriculture, health and other sectors.

Hon. Charles Abdulai spoke on timely implementation of projects and commended government for strides made in the free quality education and agricultural activities in the country.

Hon. Dr. Markmahmoud Kalokoh said the budget was misleading and cited discrepancies of funds allocated for infrastructural development in the country, and called for increased budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation.

Hon. Ambrose Maada Leby commended the government for achievements in the free quality education and referred to the budget as a transformative one. He also called for additional budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Transport and Aviation.

Hon. Daniel Koroma he hoped the issue relating to the Auditor General would be well managed in order not to affect the progress the country had made in the scorecards of the MCC. Speaking on macroeconomic variables, he said three years ago government was not able to complete any road construction in the country.

Hon. Hindolo M. Gevao said the budget was people-oriented and robust for the development of the country. Thanking the Ministry of Finance for putting a good budget together, he specifically commended the ACC for progress made thus far in the MCC scorecards for the development of the country.

Hon. Francis Saa Bhendu thanked government for the establishment of the university of science and technology in Kono District and questioned late allocation of funds to MDAs to undertake development programmes in the country. Speaking on disability issues, he called for improved energy and water supply to the people of Kono District.

Hon. Sahr Juana thanked government for increasing the salaries of security personnel and called for additional budgetary support to the same sector for the maintenance of peace, order and security of the country.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said he hoped that projects that were implemented by government would be accomplished on time and said also that agriculture was a major catalyst for the development of the country. He said government should reactivate the idea of national budget balance sheet so as to educate the general public on the management of the country's economy.

Leader of C4C, Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina described the budget as sustainable, reliable, focused and time-bound. He also said that COVID-19 pandemic had serious impacts on economies around the world. To meet the current revenue demand of the country, he called for the review of the Local Government Act of 2004 and fiscal decentralization of resources to MDAs of Government. He also said that Kono District has abundance of tourist potentials that would contribute to the development of the country, and said that the government should also focus on revenue mobilization through mining. He also thanked government for the establishment of the university of science and technology and the commissioning of the road linking Kono to Guinea border.

Rounding, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor Bah thanked the Minister of Finance for being with Parliament for the three allotted days, and said huge monies were allocated to the Bo-Mattru road in three years, and that funds were secured by the previous government for the establishment of the university of science and technology in Kono District. Questioning the implementation of the budget that was fine on paper, he said in comparison prices of commodities in Sierra Leone were higher than others in the subregion. He said increment of salaries for civil servants was good, but the establishment of new MDAs and appointment of Deputy Ambassadors including new embassies was having negative impacts on the wage Bill.

Speaking on education, debts, implementation of projects and the reduction of inflation to a single digit to meet the ECOWAS protocol, he said they must support government to reduce the debts burden on the people, otherwise it would kill the people of Sierra Leone.

Concluding, Acting Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie said governance was continuity and that the current Government would implement projects it deemed essential for the development of the country.

He recalled how available funds were handed over to former president Koroma by erstwhile president Kabbah of blessed memory for the construction of roads, but the South-East of the country did not benefit much from the infrastructural development implemented by the last government.

Speaking on the provision of free quality and affordable education for all by President Bio, he said it was a process and could not be realized overnight. He added that the wage Bill was increased by the recruitment of teachers and security personnel.

On CLSG project relating to the transfer of energy, he said Sierra Leone had completed installation and we are now waiting on Ivory Coast to complete theirs in order to provide

sustainable energy to the people of Sierra Leone, given the unsustainable supply of electricity in the country several years ago.

Speaking on institutional strengthening, he decried the last government for promising prosperity, but ended up in the declaration of austerity in the country.

He called on MPs to support the budget as it has the tendency to positively impacts the livelihoods of the people in the country.

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