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**PRESS RELEASE**

**PARLIAMENT OKAYS SEVEN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEES**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 20th May 2021 debated and approved with unanimity the First Report of the Fourth Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service, chaired by the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma.

The following presidential nominees were approved by Parliament:

1. Mr. Abu Bakarr Karim- Minister of Agriculture Forestry and Food Security
2. Dr. Theresea Tenneh Dick-Deputy Minister (II), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security
3. Mr. Buakai Bindi Hindowa-Deputy Minister, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs
4. Rtd. Col. Alhaji Funday Turay-Sierra Leone Permanent Representative to the United Nations, New York
5. Mr. Sarjoh Aziz Kamara -Deputy Minister, Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
6. Ambassador Rupert Sydney Davies-High Commissioner-Sierra Leone High Commission, Federal Republic of Nigeria and
7. Mr. Rowland Munda Stevens-Member, Board of Directors-Audit Service Board

Seconding the motion, Leader of NGC, Dr. Kandeh Yumkella endorsed and recommended the nominees for approval. He referred to them as "seasoned men and women", drawing their attention to whom much is given, much is expected. He called on the nominees to serve the nation to the best of their individual's ability.

On his part, Hon. Abdul Kargbo commended the nomination of the Deputy Minister of Higher and Technical Education because of his competence and professionalism. He called on him to explore the possibility of reviving the stalled academic programmes at the Limkokwing University in Sierra Leone.

Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebyy applauded the nomination of the Deputy Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs and informed the House that President Bio made no mistake with his appointment and wished him well in his new assignment.

Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina, Leader of C4C said President Bio has done the needful by nominating fine Sierra Leoneans to serve the nation in its transformatory trajectories for development. He called on the Minister of Agriculture to boost agricultural activity and productivity through value chain addition and laid emphasis on the proper use of tractors that are environmentally friendly with the view of improving agricultural productivities in the country.

Contributing, Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Chernor R.M Bah said they were impressed as a Committee with the presidential appointees. He described Sarjoh Aziz as a positive and professional servant and promised that he will succeed on his appointment in the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education. On the Minister of Agriculture, he referred to him as a team player and a professional of long standing. Relating to the other appointees, he urged them to perform diligently on their respective appointments with the view of transforming and meeting the developmental aspirations of the nation.

Rounding, the Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Hassan Sesay commended the nominees and praised President Bio for doing a fine and careful selection of nominees and urged them to serve in the best interest of the country.

Concluding, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma, Leader of Government Business commended MPs for honouring and accepting the nominees of President Bio whom he referred to as "professionals in their own right". He called on the nominees to do the right thing during the course of executing their duties. Speaking on effective oversight by Parliament on MDAs (Ministries, Departments and Agencies) of Government, he called on the nominees to serve in the best interest of the country.

The Rt. Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu, Speaker of Parliament congratulated the nominees and urged them to live up to the expectations of the House and the President and wished them well in their new appointments.

In another development, the Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 20/05/2021 ratified with unanimity the Treaty for the Establishment of the African Medicines Agency, Dated 11th February 2019 and the Convention A/P.1/7/92 on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters.

Both Treaty and Convention were presented by Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Austin Demby and the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Mamadi Gobe-Kamara.

MPs who spoke to both motions welcomed the initiatives of Government aimed at improving and meeting international best practices. They called on the Ministry of Health and Sanitation to do all they could to improve the health sector in the country.

Both the Acting Leaders of the Opposition and Government Business who also spoke on both motions relating to the Treaty and Convention were satisfied and emphasized the importance of joining the global community to help in the fight of pursuing and combating criminal matters through international cooperation and networks.

Also, today again 20/05/2021, the Chairman of the Legislative Committee in Parliament, Hon. Abdul Sulaiman Marray-Conteh has succinctly presented the said Committee's Report to Committee of the Whole House in respect of the Bill entitled: "The Cybercrime Act of 2020" for consideration and adoption by Parliament.

The Bill is now at the Committee Stage, where it will be later thoroughly looked into line by line, clause by clause, articulating and reflecting the concerns raised by stakeholders before it could be passed into law.

Parts of the proposed amendments in the Committee's Report include insertions and deletions of old and new clauses and phrases, definitions of terms as established in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, regulations to be made by the Minister and brought to Parliament for ratification, recommendations of severe penalties including huge fine and imprisonment or both for cybercrime such as phishing and cyber bullying. On committal of cybercrime by an individual, on conviction, that person may either be sentenced for a number of years or fined not less than Le 100 Million and not more than Le 250 Million and in the case of a corporation, partnership or association, conviction may range from several years or imposition of a fine not less than Le 500 Million and not exceeding Le 1 Billion or both fine and imprisonment depending on the nature of the crime using electronic devices such as voice or pictorial messages or depictions.

This Bill is critical to preventing and protecting privacy, data, cybersquatting, cyber bullying, cyberspace, and the information infrastructure in Sierra Leone to meet global best practices.

The Minister of Information and Communications, Mohamed Rado Swaray sat through the long and arduous presentation of the Report, subject to approval by Parliament.

During the course of reading the Report, the Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu commended the Chairman for his flare and clear use of the English language in light of clarity, audibility and pronunciation, to the agreement and applause by both sides of the aisle.

The Hon. Speaker also commended MPs in the House after 5:00 today and other stakeholders including CSOs and other individuals who made inputs in respect of the said Bill.

The Hon. Speaker also thanked the Minister of Information and tasked him to work with the Office of the Attorney General to codify the proposed amendments and present it in the form of a Bill for consideration before passage into law. Speaking on the importance of the Bill, he told the Minister of Information that once it is passed into, it will be part of his lasting legacy relating to the repeal of the infamous and obnoxious Public Order Act of 1965 under his watch.

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