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PRESS RELEASE

**PARLIAMENT RATIFIES EIGHT (8) FINANCING AGREEMENTS TO IMPROVE WATER,
SANITATION AND AGRICULTURE**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 21st May 2019 debated and unanimously ratified Eight (8) Financing Agreements geared toward the improvement of water, sanitation and agricultural activities in the country.

Presenting the Financing Agreements, the Deputy Minister of Finance, Patricia Laverly, said that they include loans and grants aimed at improving access to safe and clean water supply, sanitation, and access to rural financing for our farmers.

The following Financing Agreements were ratified by Parliament:

- I. "Loan Agreement Between the Government of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund on the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Project Dated 18th January 2018
- II. Protocol of Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund on the Freetown WASH and Aquatic Environment Revamping Project Dated 18th January 2018
- III. Subsidiary Grant Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone Represented by the Ministry of Finance and GUMA Valley Water Company Dated 29th March 2019
- IV. Subsidiary Loan Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and GUMA Valley Water Company Dated 29th March 2019
- V. Financing Agreement on Rural Finance and Community Improvement Programme-Phase II (RFCIP 2) Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development Dated 22nd November 2018
- VI. Financing Agreement on the Financial Inclusion Project Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association Dated 27th February 2019

VII. Financial Agreement-Agriculture Value Chain Development Project (AVDP) Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development Dated 1st January 2019 and

VIII. Protocol of Agreement Amongst the Republic of Sierra Leone, the African Development Bank and African Development Fund as Administrators of the Transition Support Facility for the Fiscal Consolidation Support Programme Dated 29th April 2019”

Contributing to the debate, Hon. Daniel B. Koroma of APC said that “the APC has no intention to stifle the strides made by Government as long as it is in the best interest of Sierra Leoneans”, adding that the River Rokel should be revived to supply safe and clean water to the inhabitants of Freetown. Speaking on the huge debts owed by Government’s Agencies to GUMA that is “currently operating at a loss”; he called on Government to provide MPs with tractors, even on the basis of hire-purchase to promote farming activities in their constituencies.

Hon. Musa Fofanah of C4C also said that GUMA is constrained and needs urgent support from Government to prevent its Dams from collapsing through land grabbing, encroachments and rampant deforestation around the catchment areas.

Hon. Joseph William-Lamin of SLPP, whilst speaking to the motion, pointed to the launch of 1,200 hectares of land to promote rice and sorghum farming at Mile 91 in the Northern part of the country.

The Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo referred to the financing agreements presented by the Deputy Minister of Finance “as useful and very necessary”, cognizant of Sierra Leone being “a heavily indebted country”. Speaking against deforestation, he called for the expansion of GUMA to meet its current demand. He also recognized SAT Koroma and Dr. Abass Bundu as persons who served as Ministers of Agriculture at the time Sierra Leone was exporting rice to The Gambia.

Concluding the debate, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis recalled when he served as a Board Member at GUMA and observed that payment for water remains a major challenge in the country. He called on Sierra Leoneans to pay for water and to avoid any attempt to politicize it. He also said that the financing agreements are aimed at putting money into pockets of farmers and spoke on the expansion of GUMA to provide safe and clean water to residents of Freetown.

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