



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENGAGES NASSIT AND SLRA

The Parliamentary Oversight Committee on Planning and Economic Development, chaired by Hon. Peter Yamba Koroma on Monday, 01/07/2024, engaged the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) and the Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) respectively in Freetown.

The purpose of the oversight was to discuss the Medium Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) and the Big Five (5) Game Changers and their alignment with the global development plan or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how the latter are implementing activities to achieve the indicators.

In his serial statement, at the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT) headquarters, the Chairman while speaking about the global development goals, underscored the positive alignment of MTNDP and informed that it was the aspiration of the President and the country. "The Country's Medium Term National Development Plan and the Big 5 Game Changer are in line with the global development which other countries are tied to," he maintained. He told the officials that the committee oversight is geared towards taking stock of how institutional activities are thriving to achieve the MTNDP. He revealed that soon, they are going to attend a United Nations global conference to present

a position paper on Medium Term National Development Plan as their own framework in consonance with the SDGs targeting Agenda 2030.

"Everything institution is required to give their data," he stated. He noted that some MDAs need to localize global development with the Medium National Development Plan. The MP said they wanted to know how far the various institutions have gone with the popularization of the MTNDP. "Our visit today is not to investigate you like other Committees, but will look into matters relating to Development indicators," he reiterated.

He also stressed that the Committee was not only at the entity to know how far the latter has gone with the medium-term development plan but to know their successes and challenges and how they could intervene.

Hon. Peter Yamba Koroma informed NASSIT that their findings would culminate into a report that would be tabled in Parliament and concurrently be shared with the Ministry of Planning Economic and Development for further consideration.

In his welcome address, the Acting Director General of NASSIT, Mr. Edwin Mohamed Kamara underscored the alignment of global development with the MTNDP. He categorically stated that their entire responsibilities and activities intertwine with the global development and national plan.

In his presentation, the Director of Research, Planning and Services, Joe Hassan Kalokoh said the Medium Term National Development Plan is very clear to their operations. He reiterated that social protection is very critical in the SDGs. According to him, NASSIT is purely dealing with the social insurance branch, and they are key in that aspect. He said they have a key role to play when it comes to the Big 5 Game Changer. He went on to highlight the importance of the development indicators and their contributions towards same. The researcher explained their operations in that direction, saying that they have the responsibility to provide financial benefit or assistance. He said their operations would eradicate hunger in tandem with supporting Feed Salone.

According to him, SDG1, 2 and Big 5 game Changers 1 and 5 are related to managing the government pension, amongst others. He went on to underscore their operations in investment, job creation, hospitality, agriculture, technology, innovation and infrastructure, amongst others.

"Social protection is very critical in the SDGs," he maintained and went on to say that they are working towards promoting the informal sector and other related areas.

Further, he informed the committee about the challenges key among them include compliance from employers to register their workers or provide accurate information on same. Reaching the informal sector, poor investment in the environment and existing strategy for the stock exchange performance of the economy and encroachment on their land formed parts of the challenges.

The Committee Members were satisfied with NASSIT and underscored that they touched on all aspects of the SDGs.

During an engagement with SLRA, the Deputy Director General, Ing. Vandy French explained the legal framework, mandate and other core values of their institution and went on to relate them with the MTNDP and how their targets resonate with Agenda 2030. According to him, development is a process and every year, they achieve a certain percentage. He said roads played a very key role in development and reaffirmed that their activities align with all the domesticated global development, Big 5 Game Changer. He went on to highlight the construction of roads, graduate internship programmes, technology, employment and other development.

SLRA Chief Engineer, Ing. Patrick Lavalie, in his PowerPoint presentation, specifically categorized their projects geared towards the improvement of the road network, adding that transport system is very crucial. "The Road is a primary means of transportation," he revealed to the Committee Members. He explained their operational activities on primary, secondary, and feeder roads amongst others. According to the Chief Engineer, they give Priority to the Medium Term National Development Plan, adding that they were having donor and government projects. "238.4 KM out of 345.9 KM donor project roads have been completed, " he disclosed and went on to unveil several government-sponsored road projects, including trunk road projects that are on the pipeline.

Challenges, including harmonization of SLRA Acts, SLRA are not key players in the local Council disbursement of Road Maintenance Fund, also face problems with delays in payment to Contractors.

The various concerns raised by the Committee included the lack of public trust in the authority in terms of road network and their contribution to environmental resilience issues, amongst others.

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