



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT & AVIATION VETS AUTOSPEC SL-Ltd

In its quest to fulfill one of its constitutional obligations, the Parliamentary Committee on Transport and Aviation, chaired by Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebby, conducted an oversight function at Autospect SL Limited, at Mile Six in the Western Rural District of Sierra Leone, on Wednesday, August 21st, 2024.

The Autospect was contracted by the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority (SLRSA) to handle the production of licenses, fitness tests of vehicles, and the production of Number Plates and Life Cards. The Parliamentary Oversight investigated Autospect's operations, especially license issuance, vehicle fitness tests, revenue generation, tax obligations, and social welfare for staff.

In his address to the Management of Autospect, the Chairman of the Committee, Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebby, admonished the Management that his committee's oversight visit to their facility was in tandem with the powers given to them in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone to inquire into the operations of Ministries, Department, and Agencies (MDAs) and even businesses that are in

agreement with the Government of Sierra Leone. He noted that it was not the very first-time Autospect had appeared before the committee, adding that, in the last Parliament, Autospect was probed by his committee.

The Chairman also recalled that in the Fifth Parliament, his committee had some engagement with Autospect, especially with SLRSA taking the lead. He said the addendum agreement was not ratified then, so he compelled the SLRSA and Autospect to bring the addendum agreement for ratification. He assured the management that the addendum gave the SLRSA revenue viability. He said the initial agreement that was signed catered for 10% revenue viability, but the Addendum Agreement gave SLRSA 20% revenue viability.

In accordance with the SLRSA and Autospect agreement, the Chairman affirmed that the oversight visit to Autospect was to probe Autospect regarding the amount of revenue generated, the amount transferred to SLRSA, the justification of tax contribution to the government, a copy of the work and resident permit, and the current staff strength of Autospect, among other things.

Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebby specifically mentioned Section 93 subsection 3, Section 93 subsection 6, and Section 95 subsection 6, which gave them the locus standing to probe such institutions and made the committee's power synonymous with that of the High Court. Hon. Maada Lebby allayed the fears of Autospect's management that their oversight function was not to intimidate anyone. He, however, noted that their people gave them a mandate as people's representatives. As such, they had every reason to ask the necessary questions to address their people's plight.

"In parliament, once our witnesses are before us, we put them on oath as stated in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone. We are not intimidating you. But we want to ensure that what you tell the committee is the truth. If you lie to the committee, it is perjury, an offense punishable by law. Honorable Members, your witnesses", he concluded.

Responding to the inquiries made by the committee, the Managing Director of Autospect Sierra Leone, Muhieddine Itani, edified the revenue generation of the institution for 2023. He disclosed that MC Plates were sold at NLe 80, resulting in a direct loss of revenues for SLRSA that exceeds NLe 600,000, SLRSA New Plates Revenues in 2023 is over NLe 1.8M, and MC License average sales price was NLe 209, resulting in a direct loss of revenues for SLRSA that exceeds NLe 3M SLRSA License Revenues in 2023 is over NLe 10 Million.

He added that the MC Fitness average sales price was NLe 78, resulting in a direct revenue loss for SLRSA that exceeds NLe 1.5M. SLRSA Fitness Revenues in 2023 are over NLe 6 Million, and the total revenue loss for SLRSA amounts to NLe 5.1 million. He noted that such could have been avoided if the prices had been adjusted earlier, making the revenues NLe 23.6M instead of the actual NLe 18.5 million.

The Managing Director also informed the committee that MC Plates' selling price was adjusted to NLe 240, resulting in an increase in SLRSA revenues exceeding NLe 800,000. The SLRSA New Plates Revenues Estimate in 2024 is over NLe 2.2 million.

On the licensing aspect, he said the MC License selling price was adjusted to an average of NLe 700, resulting in a direct increase in SLRSA revenues that exceeded NLe 2M. The SLRSA License Revenue Estimate for 2024 is over NLe 12 Million.

He continued that the MC Fitness selling price was adjusted to an average of NLe 250, directly increasing SLRSA's revenues exceeding NLe 2.5 million. SLRSA Fitness Revenues in 2023 were over NLe 9 Million, which resulted in a total revenue increase for SLRSA amounting to NLe 5.3 Million, which was gained based on the MC category adjustment with estimated total revenue for SLRSA.

He disclosed that Life Card issuance started in early January 2024 and will contribute to SLRSA revenues by an estimated total of NLe 5 Million, resulting in an SLRSA Life Card Estimate of over NLe 5 million in 2024. He said the estimated total revenues for SLRSA for 2024 are over NLe 29 million compared to NLe 18.5M in 2023. He acknowledged that the increase is mainly due to the launch of the new life card, adjustment of MC category prices, and adjustment of discounted commercial vehicles.

In 2023, the Managing Director also updated the committee that the total number of newly registered vehicles was 33,320, of which 21,587, or 65%, were motorcycles.

However, he said the same ratio drops to 24% only during renewal, i.e., there is an urgent need for law enforcement to increase the compliance ratio as soon as possible.

In the goal of increasing national security and boosting SLRSA's revenues, the Executive Director expressed that the authority shall introduce Pre-Registration for all motorbikes at QE Port and borders before exiting the port and borders before going to the dealerships with the following procedure:

1. The Importer gets an NRA certificate for each motorbike (Vehicle License Slip).
2. Importer presents the Vehicle License Slip issued by NRA to SLRSA
3. SLRSA Pre-Registers the motorbike details (VIN, Type, Model, Color...)
4. SLRSA issues a certificate, a prerequisite for the administrative documents required to register the motorbike for the first time.

5. Any motorbike without a pre-registration certificate from SLRSA will be penalized, which the importer/dealer should settle in favor of SLRSA, allowing him to continue the registration process.

He said that the vehicles for Fitness would be presented in two phases: Phase 1 for new registration vehicles only and Phase 2 for the entire fleet within 4-6 months after Phase 1.

He noted that this step would help integrate Fitness as a necessity for the vehicle fleet in Sierra Leone while increasing road safety and public awareness.

He assured the committee of a continuous campaign to raise public awareness about Vehicle Fitness's importance and introduce and demonstrate the new SLRSA products and services. He also requested the committee's support in helping raise awareness for the institution.

“A dedicated team from Autospect, in collaboration with SLRSA, started checking the requirements of each station in order to renovate and ameliorate the working conditions of the staff and citizens,” he assured.

The Committee expressed elation and satisfaction with the presentation of the Autospect report and the institution's facilities.

The oversight climaxed with a tour of the facilities and a group photo.

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