



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Parliament Building - O.A.U Drive, Tower Hill, Freetown | admin@parliament.gov.sl | www.parliament.gov.sl

27th August, 2024

PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT CONCLUDES OVERSIGHT AT SLPA, FIA, SLAA & YAGOI NEW JETTY PROJECT

The Honorable Members of the Parliamentary Committee on Transport and Aviation, chaired by Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebby, have concluded an Oversight function at the Sierra Leone Port Authority (SLPA), the Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA), the Freetown International Airport, and the Yagoi New Jetty Project, which is under construction at Yagoi, Bonthe District, Southern Sierra Leone. This oversight is a testament to their unwavering commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability in the Transportation and Aviation Sectors.

The Chairman of the Transport and Aviation Committee, Hon. Ambrose Maada Lebby, elucidated the significance of Parliamentary oversight, which aligns with the mandates to give adequate representation to the people and ensure efficiency in the Transport Sector. He assured the SLPA management that inasmuch as they are the people's representatives in ensuring that the right thing is done, they were also there to proactively identify and address the challenges faced by the SLPA for remedial actions, instilling confidence in their actions and decisions.

Chairman Ambrose Maada Lebby called on the SLPA's General Manager to engage the Minister of Finance, as the Minister of Finance is more than ready to undo the mistakes that have happened in the past. Hon. Lebby expressed dismay that the SLPA could not track the turnover of materials going out of the port. He acknowledged that the SLPA is not getting the revenue it deserves by law due to the avalanche of concessions. He assured the SLPA Management that the House Speaker of the Sixth Parliament, the Rt. Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas has vehemently committed to critically looking at agreements laid in the House of Parliament so that they could reflect development for the citizens of Sierra Leone, emphasizing the Committee's unwavering commitment to the welfare of the citizens.

Updating the Parliamentary Committee on Transport and Aviation, the Sierra Leone Port Authority General Manager, Yankuba Askia Bio, said the port's tariff remains the same and called on the committee to help them increase it. Initially, before 2010, he said the port was referred to as a Service Port but now dubbed the Landlord Port. He assured Members of Parliament that the port wants to venture into capital investment on the Administrative Building of the Port but noted that they are challenged with finances. He called on the committee to help the port in that direction. The oversight at the Sierra Leone Port Authority was concluded with a comprehensive presentation on the port's challenges or hindrances, opportunities, and potential threats.

The Parliamentary Transport and Aviation Committee also proceeded with its oversight function at the Sierra Leone Airport Authority by engaging Top Management regarding their overall operations. The Director General of the Sierra Leone Airport Authority (SLAA), Jack Massaquoi, expressed his appreciation for the committee's quest to oversee his institution. He acknowledged the committee's efforts and encouraged their continued involvement in the oversight of the SLAA.

He said the SLAA was used to manage the entire airport's operations. With the Suma Company, he said they are now managing the Airspace, controlling flights to land safely, and handing over to Suma. Jack Massaquoi informed the committee that one of their challenges since the Freetown International Airport came into operation is bagging to get access to the terminal. He said excluding senior staff at the SLAA not to access the terminal is humiliating to them. He, therefore, called on the committee to intervene to address such a situation. The committee took copious notes and assured the SLAA of swift intervention to remedy the situation.

In an engagement with the Senior Management of the Freetown International Airport, the Committee Chairman, Ambrose Maada Lebby, read the specific clause in the 1991 constitution, which gave the committee power equivalent to that of the High Court. Chairman reminded that on a particular occasion, his committee summoned top management of the Freetown International Airport, which they refused. He considered such action by the Suma Company as an affront to the dignity and contempt of parliament. He, however, tampered justice with mercy by considering the oversight visit to Suma Company to be a familiarization meeting. Chairman Lebby also told the management of Suma Company that there was a huge public outcry regarding the construction period of the airport.

“ A lot of concerns were raised, especially during the transfer of staff from the Airport Authority to Suma Company. We are the people’s representatives and are in the House of Parliament because of them. We encourage you to come and invest, and we take Suma Company as our partner in development. But there is no way that the people’s representatives will entertain an investor looking low upon our citizens. Parliament will resist that today and be ready to correct the wrongs of yesterday ”, he said.

The management of the Freetown International Airport, however, mesmerized the oversight committee with a comprehensive and tantalizing presentation on the airport's operation, the luxuries

embedded in it, the placement of Sierra Leoneans at top management, and the employment of Sierra Leoneans, taking cognizance of the 30% quota for women.

At Yagoi, where the committee went to inspect the ongoing construction of a New Jetty, the chairman converged cross-section of the Maritime Administration and the contractor of the Yagoi Jetty project where he made it known to them that he knew details of the project and sent strong-worded advice to the contractor to do a thorough job for the people in that part of the country. He said the committee is aware of the specifications of materials for the project, including the Iron Rods, among others. Hon. Maada Lebby raised some concerns about their inspection, concluding that the work is unsatisfactory so far. He called on the contractor to do the best work for the People of Yagoi and Bonthe District as a whole. He particularly emphasized the contractor's use of the specified iron rods and quantum of cement for a durable test of time for the jetty. The chairman said he is the people's representative and would stand for the people and decry the project if quality work is not done.

The Managing Director of Assil Enterprise, Assil Jawad, updated the committee that the project entails the construction of the jetty with the Sea face, fencing of the jetty, office space and toilet, reclamation, and back feeding. He assured the committee that they had not finished the project, adding that he would do quality work for the people in that part of the country. He said the terminal building is at 65% completion, the Generator House 70% completion, the Gate House 0%, the fence 65% completion, the Sea Face Protection 80% completion, and Reclamation 70% completion. He assured the committee that they would not alter the drawing of the plan. The oversight was concluded with a conducted tour of the project site.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department.

Contact: +23278495023/+23276625960/+23278424851/+23278697776/+23277473804

Website: www.parliament.gov.sl