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PRESS RELEASE



SECOND ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 25/05/2022 continued debates on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency the President, Brigadier Rt. Julius Maada Bio's address, he so graciously delivered on the Occasion of the State Opening of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Tuesday 10th May 2022.

Making his submission to the debate, Hon.Dr. Roland Kargbo said the ideas in the speech were not set properly, adding that, President Bio wanted to kill two birds with one stone. He decried the previous debater and that what is contained in the speech does not reflect on the people, relating it to the economic wellbeing of the citizenry. He thanked President Bio for the infrastructural development of education and expressed concerns over quality, including teachers' welfare and fake certificates, and he commended the government for the radical inclusion of pregnant pupils in school, and spoke about the sustainability of the Free Quality Education. He also thanked President Bio for the promises he had made for Karefa District but raised concerns that they are yet to be fulfilled.

On his part, Hon. Joseph Bash Kamara thanked President Bio for the development strides undertaken so far and used the opportunity to denounce the previous debater and spoke about the eleven years of APC misrule. He said President Bio is working assiduously to maintain political stability. "His Excellency has committed himself to economic Prosperity and investment growth" he noted, and spoke about government support to the private sector,

amounting to five hundred billion Leones to boost the economy against the global pandemic effect on the country. He also spoke about the economic trajectory including the completion of development projects left behind by the previous government. He described the education, health, infrastructural, and electricity projects of the government as big boost to the country. "The SLPP Government is an architect of development" he maintained, and went on to give indicators and appealed to others to support the development agenda.

Hon. Sahr Francis Bendu threw light on the President's speech and noted that it was expecting them to lend hands to support the government agenda. He commended the government for the provisions of the five hundred billion Leones credit facility but decried the process regarding the selection. He spoke about the construction of trunk roads and recommended to the government do stop awarding such contracts in the rains and also conduct proper monitoring mechanisms. He also spoke about the award of scholarships to a student of Murando Private school using the opportunity to commend private school performance in public exams and decried government schools. In light of the above, he recommended to the government to recruit more qualified teachers, construct more classrooms to address overcrowding, and open more teaching training institutions. The late delivery of teaching and learning materials, he said affects the system and recommended swift government intervention. He also asked the government to look into recent teachers' issues and to support as well as create accessibility for persons with disability.

Hon. Rev. Horace E. Vincent while saying thanks, said President Bio deserved showers of blessings. He referenced former President Koroma's APC manifesto of 2012 on the Free Healthcare program, adding that, there were inadequate drugs to run that service, and went on to commend President Bio for reducing the infant and maternal mortality rate in the country. He also comparatively denounced the previous government and heaped praises on President Bio for improvement in education, electricity, and health services. He also spoke about political instability and vehemently blamed political stalwarts for hiring youths to cause mayhem. He used the opportunity to advise youths to disassociate themselves from such. The MP denounced the Previous government for attempting to construct the costly Mamamah Airport and commended President Bio for the construction of a new terminal at Lungi, that is less costly.

Hon. Lahai Marrah described President Bio as a lucky and blessed man and went on to speak on the political tolerance of former President Koroma whose wisdom helped the latter to gain power. He decried the government for the hike in the price of essential commodities, amidst massive suffering, increase in public debts, bad GDP, decried the wage bills, and other related economic driven and development. He referenced the Auditor General's Report and decried the Ministry of Finance for overspending the national budget, without a supplementary budget and called for an investigation into the issues. He Spoke about corruption in high state offices. Speaking about political stability, he strongly said that, the Government removed some Members of Parliament and replaced them. Recalling arrests of his party members, injustice against them and went on to assure that, they would continue to maintain peace and stability.

Hon. Musa Fofana described the speech as a detailed report, referencing the committee oversight activities to justify the development. He recalled late President Kabba's efforts and relate them to the development of the current Government in the mining sector. The MP pointed out the Tonkolili mining deal as beneficial to the people and urged the government to replicate same in other areas. As chairman of the Development and Economic Planning Committee, he continued to reference President Kabba's development agenda to the current trend of continuity of this government, especially for road constructions. According to the MP, the current development trajectory is merely describing the development nature of President Bio. Hon Fofana lauded the efforts of the oversight committee in promoting government efforts on road construction. Health he said, was in a very critical condition but has improved in terms of infrastructure, recruitment of health workers, and advanced training of health personnel. Continuing to laud government efforts, he measured the process of the NaCSA Safety Net as transparent and essential for the people. He described the Free Quality Education as a job well accomplished and asked compatriots including parents to add quality to the learning process. Questioning the position of the Sierra Leone Teacher Union (SLTU) to advocate for teachers, he recommended to the latter to mediate the recent concern raised by the former with the government. He also commended the government for the provisions and expansion of water supply. "I want this Parliament to thank Road Maintenance Fund (RMFA), for providing fund to Councils for road constructions and European Union for supporting some councils" he maintained.

Hon Latif Sesay thank the President for the true confession he made in his speech. According to the MP, this government is known for casting blame on the previous regime and now an international global crisis, adding that President Bio has not been able to fulfill his promises. He gave indicators of unfulfilled promises to teachers, upgrading hospitals, and that, the government is only commissioning projects left behind by the previous government. He insisted that the direction is not good for their people.

Hon. Sheku Munir Turay said the government has made several achievements and went on to advise others to be constructive in their criticism as they are part of governance. Referencing the wage bill, he commended the government for creating more employment opportunities. He spoke positively about demand and supply, overspending, inflation amidst the global pandemic crisis and deficit as well as economic development. He informed that amidst all the situation the government was on development track. He thank Parliament for their efforts to supporting the government and advised colleague MPs not to embark on negativity as they are part of the process. "President Bio's government includes all of us, but if we continue to negate it, we are not part of it" he stated; adding that the government is doing well in the education sector, referencing more enrollments, suggesting quality teacher's employment, the effort of health workers and added that, skill training must relate to the requirements of demand and supply. "We need to work in our rigid way to support the government," he stated.

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