



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELESES



SECOND ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2024

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday, 22/11/2023 Continued its debate on the Bill entitled; "Appropriation Act, 2024" (Budget) for the development of the State, on the Theme; "Restoring Macroeconomic Stability while Protecting the Poor and Vulnerable".

The Bill seeks to provide an Authorized expenditure from the Consolidated Fund for the Services of Sierra Leone for the year 2024 and other related matters.

Continuing the debate, Hon Ing. Habib Fabbah described the Bill as a hope for Sierra Leone and added that the budget would not only liberate the country but would transform its economic growth and agriculture. He underscored Government developmental projects including roads, energy, job creation, and other sectors, "We may look at this budget as a fruitful document and to make sure we support it" he maintained and asked the opposition to criticize the budget constructively.

On his part, Hon.Abdal Timbo Esq. informed the House about a certain occurrence within the health sector and disclosed the influx of imported goods in the market. He spoke about the inadequate supply of budget to MDAs as a perpetual problem. The MP denounced the budget deficit of the State. "Mr. Speaker Hon. Members, is this budget enough to service Sierra Leone" he stated and decried the previous speaker for referring to the car wash center as job creation. He urged colleague MPs to be patriotic and serve the State. "No nation can tax its way out of poverty" he noted and went on to decry the Wage Bill. The MP comparative analyzed the growth of Singapore and advised the Government to follow that trend. He emphatically decried heavy taxation, in light of growth, and heaped praises on President Bio for promoting young leadership.

Hon. Alpha Jabbie commended the previous speaker for his constructive criticism and patriotic contributions, but denounced pull-down syndrome. He debunked an MP for informing the House that a car wash center at Mile 91 is now a 'kush' center. While supporting the 5% tax levied on rice, the MP advanced justifications. He assured the House of the prospect of Feed Salone and stated that it would be implemented successfully and asked colleague MPs to rally behind President Bio to achieve the project. He spoke well of the systematic and gradual progress of the School Feeding Programme and also the Free Quality Education.

Hon. Mahmud Kamara said the theme of the budget cut his attention, but criticized the budget strongly. The MP expressed dismay over the increment of taxation and disclosed to the House that there is no proper health service at Lumley Community. He commended Ministry of Finance for stating the completion of Lumley Hospital projects. He blamed the Government for the depreciation of the State currency and suggested to the House to summon the Bank Government to explain how much new currency was printed.

Hon Abdul Karim Bangura denounced the Opposition for coming to Parliament late and described the budget as a sincere and honest document. The MP recalled that the previous Government used to operate on a "dig hole koba hole" budget and went on to refer to the budget as a "Solution". He revealed that it was unanimously agreed by the House to accept the 5% tax increment. The MP emphasized the proper utilization of funds accrued from the 5% tax on the development of the State. He heaped praises on the President for several exemplary roles and also for progressive development in Karena district. He appealed for the construction and completion of a major road in that district.

Hon. Mabinty Forna said the budget was timely, but an increment in the Wage Bill must be supported with detailed manpower planning. She asked Government for an urgent intervention to address the suffering of the people amidst, the hike in inflation. She expressed dismay over the life expectancy rate of the Country, relating it to a high level of corruption and poverty-related issues. She emphasized that Sierra Leone needs an urgent and comprehensive re-adjustment of the economy. The MP commended the Minister for being honest with the budget, highlighting the safeguards factors. She suggested Parliamentary oversight, in light of the budget implementation.

Hon. Alex M. Rogers highlighted some issues in the budget and denounced previous speakers for negative criticism of the car wash project, describing same as a quick recovery poverty project. He referred to the budget as a "Progressive Budget" and went on to highlight some positive strides of the Government regarding energy with a comparative analysis of megawatts between the past and current governments.

The MP dilated objectively on the risk in the budget relative to the social phenomenon.

Hon. Mohamed Alpha Jalloh said the people of Falaba District have been deceived by the Government for allocating a pittance fund for road projects for that area. The MP said that the funding is a deception to the people of Falaba District.

The MP strongly criticized the Government of fiscal management with comparative data analysis within the subregion. "This country had lost the war on fiscal management", he stated and went on to refer to the budget as a 'Killer budget' He emphasized that the Government wanted to kill its citizens through the 5% taxation, before they start to implement the Feed Salone project. The MP called for financial discipline to address the economic crisis. "Why do we budget, more than what we have"?, he asked the House. He concluded by asking the Government for the provision of basic amenities for the citizens.

Hon. Edward George in his submission requested the Government to construct important roads in the Moyamba District. "The Moyamba district had contributed heavily to the development of the nation through taxation from mining companies operating in the District," he said.

He called for a change of attitude towards the development of the nation and decried certain agreements signed by the previous government.

The MP debunked certain statements made by opposition MPs in their contributions to the debate and also allegedly recalled that former President Koroama lavished the State resources by traveling with 250 Sierra Leonean delegates to attend the UN General Assembly.

The MP advocated for the disbursement of funds to the Local Government and Community Affairs Ministry and also informed the House that devolved sectors in the local councils were not performing.

Hon. Mohamed Papa Bangura urged colleague MPs to depoliticize the debate and the budget, comparatively analyzing how compatriots were battling with the price of goods. He spoke on three key issues relative to the welfare of the people of Bombali, adding that road construction projects halted in Kerena and Bombali respectively since 2018. He denounced the 5% taxation on rice and pointed out the importance of certain major roads that are yet to be constructed. The MP also alleged that Bombali has not benefited from the Cash Transfer Project and recalled the Makeni riot. He compared the low budget allocation to the Ministry of Youth Affairs, in light of its huge employment in the premier league to the budget of the Office of the Chief Minister.

Hon. Charles Abdulai debunked the previous speaker on price analysis of goods and services and heaped praises on the Minister and team for the economic management of the State. He also decried the earlier speaker on allegations of unfair distribution of road construction projects to Bombali. He made reference to the global economic crisis and urged colleague MPs to support the budget as according to him, it would address the economic problems. He clarified several concerns earlier raised by colleague MPs and drew the attention of the Minister to funding Feed Salone with regards to the projection.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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