



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASES



THIRD ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON THE 2024 BUDGET

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Thursday, 23/11/2023 continued debate on the Bill entitled; "Appropriation Act, 2024" (Budget) for the development of Sierra Leone 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.

Making her submission to the debate, Hon.Rosy Rugiatsu Kanu from Western Area Urban said the 5% tax imposition on rice will only compound poverty among the people of Sierra Leone and went on to plead with the Government to reduce taxes on the basic amenities for the citizens.

The MP underscored the essence of access to water and sanitation in schools. "Children will not develop their education without access to water and good sanitation", she said and went on to advocate for more budgetary allocation for that sector.

She called for more construction of pre-schools around the country and underscored additional budgetary allocation to Gender Ministry. She emphasized on the popularization of the Gender Bill and also pleaded with transport Ministry to supply enough buses for schools and the people in the Western Area Urban.

On her part, Hon.Nenneh Lebbie from Bo District clarified that there was no need for the importation of rice. "If Sierra Leone used to feed itself and export to other countries why now", she asked and went on to inform that bad governance and politics could be the cause. Hon.Lebbie commended the visionary leadership of President Bio for transforming the agricultural sector and

advised her colleague MPs not to politicize the budget, but rather urged all to come together and develop the nation.

On the 5% imposition of tax on rice, the MP welcomed the idea from the Government and went on to appeal to Sierra Leoneans to embark on farming. She also called on Citizens to embark on fish farming and advocate for more budget allocation to the fishery sector for effective service delivery. Youth in fishing she said must be given attention for the development and employment in the country.

Hon. John Sartty Kargbo from Western Area Rural District said the budget should be discussed fairly and went on to outline the challenges.

On tax imposition on rice, he said it would not yield dividends for the people of Sierra Leone. He also said infrastructural development is very important for the development of the nation and called on the State to focus on same. The MP called on the Finance Ministry to address taxation and also address the livelihood of Sierra Leoneans.

Hon Quntin Sallia-Konneh from Kailahun District said he is very disappointed with the contributions of the opposition on the budget and for not complimenting the work of the President. He said the destruction of Sierra Leone can be written by the APC whenever they are in governance and applauded the work of President Bio.

Hon.Mabinty Taylor Bangura from Kambia District appreciated the APC party for granting her symbol to represent the people of Kambia.

On the Feed Salone project, she said the 7% budget allocated to the Agriculture Ministry is abysmal and noted that there is nothing to write home about. The MP reflected on the past glory of Sierra Leone's agriculture and development sector in feeding its people. "What we have in this document are political gimmicks", and warned that the 5% imposition on rice is a diabolical act to the citizens. The MP expressed doubt over the Government to achieving Feed Salone initiatives. She concluded by urging Government to utilize Kambia district for the promotion of Agricultural productivity.

Hon. Maada Lebby from Bo District appreciated the budget and referred to it as the "Kombra budget" and reiterated that President Bio is determined to transform the Country.

The MP said the 5% tax imposition on rice would enable the Government to actualize development on the Feed Salone and other related projects for the nation.

The MP informed the House that, presently fifty buses are in the Country to support the transport sector and went on to acknowledge the work of the President. He called on his colleagues MPs to support the President to achieve his objectives to develop the nation.

On his part, Hon. Musa Fofanah from Kono District said the SLPP Government has demonstrated responsibility in terms of development.

He recalled how the train was removed by the APC Government because it was benefiting the South-East and went on to decry the APC rules. He went on to refer to the budget as a "palatable budget", He underscored the tremendous development made by this Government, relative to road construction in the country. He comprehensively referred to Late President Kabba's speech on the road infrastructure plan for the country and went on to allude to the fact that developments are done by the SLPP Government.

He elaborated that the Kono people have never benefited from a tangible development under the watch of the former APC Government.

On the Mid-term national development document, he said all the organs involved in it have been successfully implemented by this Government and concluded by appreciating President Bio.

Hon. Tamba Kellie from Kono District commended the Finance Minister and his team and went on to touch on infrastructure. He said that the Kono people have not benefited from this Government in terms of development, but commended the same for the electricity expansion drives for the Kono people. He said a lot of money had been poured into the electricity system of the country and expressed dismay over EDSA for lethargy to utilize huge amount of money given to them to improve on service delivery.

"Kono does not matter to anyone who is not supporting the Kono people", he concluded.

Hon. Bash Kamara from Bo District said the traveling of President Bio internationally has transformed and yielded dividends for the country.

On taxation, he said it is not new for the people of Sierra Leone and went on to note that taxes are necessary to bridge the gaps and referred to the budget as a "progressive Budget.

On education, he said the Government had increased budget allocation for the sector and with huge recruitment of teachers. On agriculture he said, the Government is trying to revitalize the sectors with the intention of the Feed Salone program. He informed that despite all the prosperity in eleven years, the former APC Government was not able to develop the nation.

Hon. Aruna Papay Larkoh from Tonkolili District said the contributions of the ruling Government MPs on the budget undermined development.

He called on the Government to listen to the people and note that the people are suffering through economic hardship. "Use your nationalistic lens to address the budget", he warned and went on to refer to the budget as a "killer budget".

On the car wash project, the MP said it is not good for the youth and implored on the Government to do more to empower them.

On her part, Hon Magret F. Johnson from Kailahun District said the budget is comprehensive and beneficial for the people of Sierra Leone.

The MP submitted that the health sector is thriving on the right trajectory.

The MP praised the First Lady for supporting the health sector and went on to challenge the budget for Parliament, in the area of health facilities.

She said the President had put more effort into the health sector and called on him to direct more budgetary allocation into that sector.

The MP lobbied with the Finance Ministry to consider the road network for her people in the Kailahun district.

She called for placement of accident emergency hub on major highways leading to the provinces.

The MP concluded by calling on the Government to address teenage pregnancy in the Country.

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