

*20AU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

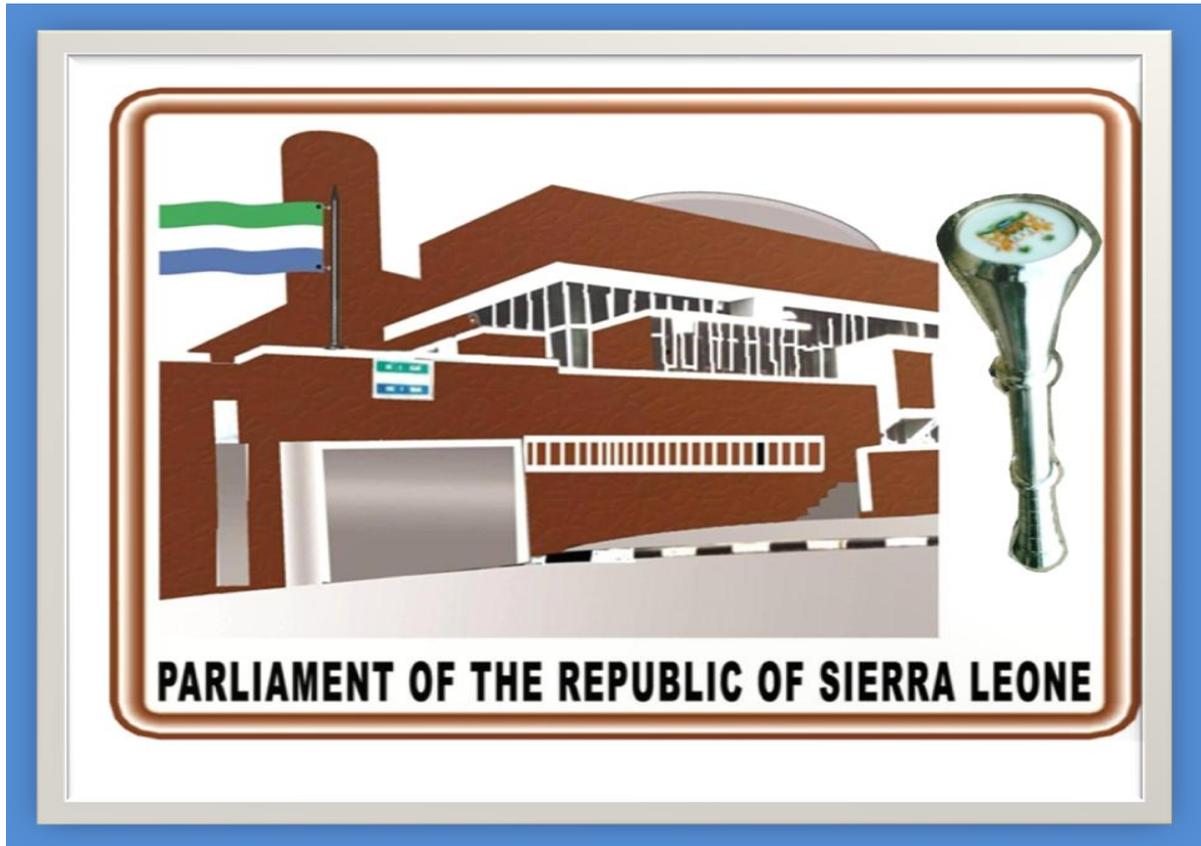
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION - FIRST MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 3<sup>RD</sup> JULY, 2018**

*SESSION – 2018/2019*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 16**

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First Meeting of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament  
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018.

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*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

**Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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**FIFTH SESSION – FIRST MEETING  
OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT  
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018.**

**I. PRAYERS**

*[The Table Clerk, Mr Lamin Yansaneh, Read the Prayers]*

*[The House met at 10:00 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

*[The Acting Speaker, Honourable Veronica K. Sesay, in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

**MR UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY [Clerk of Parliament]:** Honourable Members, I announce the unavoidable absence of both Mr Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. Therefore, pursuant to Section 88[C] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991 and Standing Orders 10[1] of this House, the House may therefore elect, from amongst its Members, a person to take charge of today's proceedings.

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [Leader of Government Business]:** Mr Clerk, Honourable Members, in line with Section 88[C] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, in tandem with S.O. 10[1], I hereby nominate Honourable Veronica K. Sesay to act as Speaker for today's proceedings *[Applause]*.

**MR UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY:** Any seconder to that Motion?

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Mr Clerk, I second that Motion *[Applause]*.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[The Motion to elect Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay to act as Speaker of the House for today's proceedings has been unanimously carried]*

**MR UMAR PARAN TARAWALLY:** Honourable Members, I would now call on Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay to withdraw from the Well, robe and take the Chair as Acting Speaker *[Applause]*.

## **II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2018**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before we go to the record of Votes and Proceedings, I want to take this special honour and gratitude to thank you for what you have just done this morning. This has shown that the women in this country have started to see the light at the tunnel *[Applause]*. You have reposed in me your confidence this morning and I will not let you down. I will prove to you that what men can do with respect, women can even do it better *[Applause]*. We are going to skip the record of Votes and Proceedings because it is not properly laid before me this morning. Thank you *[Applause]*.

### **III. PAPERS LAID**

[A] HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

THE LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION NEC-SL ANNUAL REPORT, 2017

**HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS:** Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of the House, The National Electoral Commission NEC-SL Annual Report 2017 *[Applause]*.

[B] THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE

**DR PATRICIA NYANGA LAVERLEY** *[Deputy Minister of Finance]* Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following documents:

[i] Bank of Sierra Leone Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2016.

[ii] Financial Agreement [Additional Financing for the West African Power Pool – Cote D’ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Power Interconnection Project], between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association, Credit Number 6148 SL *[Applause]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, at this point, I want to interrupt the proceedings by recognising these beautiful strangers from the United States of America [USA]. They have been doing a great job in our country in the areas of education, health and infrastructure. They are here this morning under the auspices of one of the Honourable Members, Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin. I want to welcome you to our noble House and we have heard a lot about you and what you have been doing for us, especially in the area of education. We are going to do exactly like Oliver Twist. You have been doing it and we want you to do more because the ‘New Direction’ is geared towards free education in this country. On the area of education, you have been providing learning materials, scholarships etc. We want you to do more and to even extend it to other areas instead of concentrating on Constituency 081. We hope and pray that you would do more for this country.

Having said that, I want to welcome you to Sierra Leone and I hope that you will enjoy your stay. I will just announce their names. Please stand as your name is called for recognition.

1. Madam Cynthia A. Nofziger;
2. Natalie A. Gordon;
3. Jennifer Kempf; and
4. Jusufu Williams Kazen.

Thank you very much *[Applause across the House]*.

**HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH:** Thank you very much Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I rise to congratulate you on this very important election to serve as Acting Speaker for today's proceedings. This is a very good day and we are not just happy for you, but also for the women of this country *[Applause]*. If I may add, this is also a testimony that the men will do all we can to support women with capacity to serve in the right places. If it was a male Honourable Member that was nominated this morning, things would have changed because one of us could have occupied that Chair. However, we are very happy because we are seeing a woman occupying that Chair. We hope to see more opportunities for women to act as Speaker when the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are not present.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sure my colleagues might also want to say a few words. I would not want to close the door. I want to say that on my behalf and those who would not have the opportunity to catch your eye, I want to congratulate you and wish you well until the Speaker or his Deputy is back. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, this is the 'New Direction' and we give the minority the platform to exercise their democratic rights and their liberty to participate in governance. We have just started and if you check the nominees we have approved here to serve in various Ministries, Departments and Agencies [MDAs], you would realise that even the Attorney-General is a woman. So, we are taking affirmative actions to ensure that gender equality is assured. We did not get this in the Bible or the Quran; and even the creation story, tells us that man was created before the woman. We are giving you

the compliment to work side by side and you take the necessary actions that will ensure that this country takes a platform in the 'New Direction.' We wish you all the best.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, Members have raised issues concerning their welfare and their entitlements. You were here in the last Parliament when the Deputy Speaker raised an issue concerning a Member of Parliament. In your capacity today, I hope and pray that you would address that issue because the issue of parliamentarians is very paramount. Gone are the days when people will come into this Well and try to demean the respect of parliamentarians. If you look at Section 97 of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, it is very clear. Honourable Members should behave properly in and out of the precincts of Parliament. I do not want the new Members of Parliament to look at the trajectory we are coming from, but where we are going. With the present leadership, let us address some of these problems.

Madam Speaker, the other area I want to talk about is finance. I know you are affected. We are the body that approves salaries of the different MDAs and other government functionaries. I will not go into the nitty gritty of that because my colleagues have started murmuring. With your leadership and by virtue of the fact that you are a Member of the ECOWAS Parliament, you know what is happening here. You are the oldest Member of Parliament in this Well.

Madam Speaker, I believe you will make the difference for this moment you are acting as Speaker. I believe something will happen and you will address the issue of finance with the Ministry of Finance appropriately. I believe that Members of this Honourable House will give you the support today. Even those who feel we have not done anything, they will begin to see soonest. You have to read the concept of the 'New Direction,' which we have started. Congratulations and I wish you all the best. I pray that before leaving here, you will take us for lunch today, so that things will begin to happen. That is the gender equality you have been fighting for.

Madam Speaker, I believe this one will go into your resume and you will take another platform. As I look at you, I see you in the seat of being in the cabinet, but that will come when necessary. I wish you all the best, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us hear the voice of a lady.

**HON. REBECCA Y. KAMARA:** Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, as I stand here this morning, I feel very good. I stand to be corrected, but in the history of this Parliament, this is the first time we are having a female acting as Speaker. I stand to be corrected, Honourable Members. For me and for this Parliament or the last ten years, this is the first time a woman with a noble character, a woman with fine heart and a mother, being elected to this position. As a Secretary General of the Women's Caucus, I stand here to thank all of you on behalf of the women. I know other women would want to speak, but as the Secretary General, I want to thank all of you for making our mother the acting Speaker of this noble House *[Applause]*.

Madam Speaker, I know you will not only serve today. Maybe other women will also serve in that position. What I want to say here is that we have a lot to do. We are asking the authorities of this Parliament, especially the Administrative Wing or the Leader of Government Business, to support us. There are eighteen Members of Parliament who are women in this Parliament and we need capacity building. We have a lot to do out there. We are just eighteen and there are millions of women out there who need us. We are not against present leadership, but we have a lot of work to do.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, we are looking up to you as a woman who has served in this Parliament for a long time to see how you can uplift the banner of women higher and higher, more than before. We are not only expecting this in one district, but all over Sierra Leone. I am also admonishing other female parliamentarians to cooperate as we have started, leaving behind our political indifferences or political parties. We have to work together in terms of resolving issues affecting women of this country. Our colleagues voted for us and they are expecting a lot from us. We have to stand firm and do all we can to alleviate their problems. We have children who are women and they are looking up to us. Our names have already gone down in history that we, in this Fifth Parliament, have done something remarkable. Our names will be reference for what we have done.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, since we have a lot to do, we are expecting the men to give us the required supports. We are not looking down on them nor fighting them, but we are appealing that they give us the necessary supports we

need, so that we can work more than before. We need more women in this Parliament and more women in positions of trust because we can do marvellous things.

On this note, Madam Speaker, I want to congratulate you as the Acting Speaker and as President of the Female Caucus. Keep up the good work you are doing and show us the right path we should follow; the road that will lead Sierra Leone to a better life and the road that will lead Sierra Leone to the Agenda for 'New Direction.' The 'New Direction' should not say, 'this is our time, we get things spoilt.' I always say here that tears have run down the eyes of many people, especially the women of this country. Now that you are in this position, help the tears of women and even the men who were crying to stop crying. Thank you very much.

**HON. DR KANDEH KOLLEH YUMKELLA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, I could not resist the temptation to also say Madam Speaker, as you know for even stronger reasons the affiliations to Moyamba and of course to Sembahun Nee Tucker. It is an honour and privilege for me to recognise you in that seat, another major step for gender parity in our country. We hope this picture can be shared to our young women in the country, so that they could also sit in that Chair or maybe, be President of this Republic one day. I want to say congratulations. We will support you as you pursue and guide our deliberations in the House. Once again congratulations.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Madam Speaker, I am not sure if I have any new adjective to describe the position you have attained this morning. Whether it is going to be for a day or two, one hour or more, the fact remains it will go into the history of this country that Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay acted as Speaker of Parliament in Sierra Leone. I want to say Kudus to you.

Madam Speaker, my short statement is going to be on the type of synergy we have created in this Well this morning. This is an attestation to those out there that the **APC, SLPP, C4C** and **NGC** are working in unison. The fact that the Leader of the Opposition allowed me to withdraw the Motion that I seconded for him to second that Motion, sent a clear signal to our people out there that they should stop fighting for APC, SLPP and C4C. I have always told people that when we are in this Well or in

Parliament, we are brothers and sisters. Even if they see us knocking our heads, let them not copy us because we are brothers and sisters in Parliament. That is the message we have sent this morning. I want to thank my colleagues and I hope that this trend will continue until the life of this Parliament elapsed. I want to say thank you very much, Madam Speaker and I wish you well. Thank you very much.

**HON. P.C. FATMATA NEAMA Y. KAJUE VI [Moyamba District]:** Madam Speaker, I stand here to congratulate you. The **30%** of the women have been crying for had not been achieved, but I think this is the beginning. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, for the sake of seniority, I will ask the Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo to make his own statement.

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGBO:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I believe what has happened this morning is a continuation of the new thinking of Sierra Leoneans that women and men are co-equals. I will congratulate our friends on the other side for coming up with the whole concept of having you as our Speaker this morning. I have great hope that this will be the beginning of a continuum in your political career. I can easily even suggest that you are qualified to be Vice President one day *[Applause]*.

Madam Speaker, one important thing that made me to stand up to make few statements is the fact that I have realised over the years that you are a thorough Sierra Leonean. You are not just a Southerner or a Northerner, you are a Sierra Leonean. When you speak the Mende language, we admire you and when you speak the Temne language, we appreciate you. Again, when you speak Sherbro language, we further admire you greatly, which means that you are a true Sierra Leonean.

Madam Speaker, what I would want to admonish you in this morning's session and your ascension to that Chair, which can easily be described as temporary, is that you should continue to demonstrate leadership, especially among your women folks. They look up to you for leadership and you are the head of the Women's Caucus. Now that you have started gravitating to the top, all I can say is that continue to demonstrate good leadership, which they all expect to derive from you.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, we have agreed that even our own women have matured to the extent that we can sit here and allow them to preside over us. We have to congratulate ourselves as well *[Applause]*. More importantly, Madam Speaker, this is history for us; this is history for you; and it is history for your family. I use this opportunity to congratulate you on your elevation and I am not going to call it temporary. It is high elevation and I also want to congratulate you and your family for this very important development this morning. Thank you very much *[Applause]*

**HON. MOHAMED BANGURA:** Madam Speaker, what has just happened this morning is a clear testimony to show what we call 'collaboration.' I am sure the Leader of Government Business is here. When two people sit and talk, they produce results and this is what has happened. I wish this sit and talk could have happened few days ago *[Applause]*.

Madam Speaker, I know that your being there this morning is as a result of your hard work. Everybody in this House can attest to the fact that you deserve it and you have made history this morning. I know you will continue to make history because your style of leadership will continue to elevate you. You cut across party lines and you do not want to know where this Honourable Member belongs. You talk to everybody in this House. That is why you are where you are. We are just saying this morning that had it not been the leadership of both the opposition and the ruling parties; it could have been difficult for you. However, it has been made easier for them to sail through. It is clear that the opposition is in majority. If they put an issue that has to do with the collective interest of all of us, we are going to support it. It is on that note I would congratulate you. I hope you would continue to serve as Speaker over and over again.

**THE SPEAKER:** I will take two more speakers.

**HON. HARIYATU A. BANGURA:** Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, I am beginning to see my dreams come true, 'e-shala.' In my maiden speech, I vividly yearned for this. I was looking forward to a time when I would say Madam Speaker. Today, if a woman of substance, a mother, a magnificent elite is elected to preside, I am seeing that God is answering my prayers. So, I will keep praying.

Madam Speaker, I feel elated this morning to see you sitting there. When a child is sick, a woman asks for leave, but a man will never ask for leave when a child is sick. That shows the importance of a woman. Even when paternity leave is granted to a man, he uses that time to sit at the 'Attire Base.' Three months maternity leave is not enough for a woman. My message to the 'New Direction' is simply. I want them to consider more women in leadership positions. Women are created out of a man's rib, which shows that a woman should be partner to the man. The rib was not taken from the head or feet, but was taken from the side simply because we are to be partners. Both men and women have different qualities and with those qualities put together, we will be able to move this country forward. We are not made to be trampled upon or for you to step on us, we are not made for you to carry us on your heads, and we are meant to be partners *[Applause]*.

Madam Speaker, for the few minutes you have taken that seat, we have seen what you have demonstrated here today. We have also seen what has happened in this Parliament. We have seen indiscriminate. I do not want the men to think I am feminist. Of course I am, but we need you to support us. Please support more women. When you have a good and decent woman at home, you will have little to do. Your money will be saved for other developmental issues. Please support the women. What the Lord has done for us this morning shall be permanent. What the Lord has done for the President of the Female Caucus shall be permanent. "E-shala' S.O [2], it shall be permanent in Sierra Leone. Thank you very much.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Madam Speaker, Honourable Members, the woman acting as Speaker this morning is a woman of virtue. She is a Leader and she has my full support S.O.[2] 'ar dae wit u.' I have spent many years in promoting and supporting women in Sierra Leone in various organisations. My colleagues here today can testify to that. On that note, we have a huge task as Members of Parliament. The taxpayers' money will not be sufficient to handle these tasks, especially the numerous outlined projects. We therefore have to do all we can within our mandates to be friendly with our people. We have to go back to our olden days friends, to establish relationships and this is what we have demonstrated here this morning. If go back to Madam Cynthia Nofziger, we met in 1985 when she was a

Corp volunteer in Sierra Leone. She came back to Sierra Leone in 2004, after the war, and we started comparing notes to see what could be done in Sierra Leone and I want to tell you humbly that we have been able to extend our tentacles to Bombali, Tonkolili, Western Area, Bo and a village in the Bonthe. We constructed 23 primary schools and provided supports to them. We have also constructed septic toilets, water wells and recently, we have introduced what we call 'menstruation kit production.' There are eighteen female Members of Parliament in this Well. Many women in Sierra Leone used what we call 'grandma theory.' We have introduced a system that is adding value to women. I want to recognise you, I want to appreciate you and I want to ask that we involve other Sierra Leoneans as you have done in the past, so that they can come home to see what could be done.

Madam Speaker, Madam Jeniffer, Madam Nalalie and Brother Yusifu have been away for twenty-eight years, but you have not forgotten Sierra Leone. I want you to share this message with other Sierra Leoneans out there. We have done it to Nadi Williams, Ishmail Beah, Kai Kamara and Mike Lahooh, who have shared their resources with us in Sierra Leone. On that note, please take this message with you that we have more tasks to accomplish. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Members. I want to thank you for the accolades you have showered on me. Sometimes it is good to give tributes to people when they are alive. The living deserves tributes more than the dead. We should not wait till somebody dies before saying all good things about him/her. I believe it is just a word of mouth and I can say that is a fruitless endeavour. What you have demonstrated here this morning shows that we are united. I nearly shed tears when Honourable Members on both sides of the isle were eulogising me. This has shown that I was doing good work.

Honourable Members, if anybody would have told me last year or years back that one day I will be sitting on this chair, I would have doubted the statement. I however want to remind you that nothing is impossible in the eyes of God, as long as there is life. I want you to be rest assured that your tomorrow will be greater than today. The music I like best is 'My tomorrow will be greater than today. When I was praying this morning, I told my children why I love to sing that song. And today,

I am seated right here. This is no magic at all. I want to inform you that I am impressed.

Honourable Members, I told you that I am a mother and I will continue to be a mother for both sides of this House. I have heard the problems you have just highlighted; i.e., Members' welfare, etc. We usually increase salaries of ministers and other officials, but we are here with problems in our constituencies *[Applause]*. The meagre salary we are paid here is not enough *[Applause]*. I want to assure you that I will take your message to those concerned. I am going to make sure that I follow it to the latter. What has happened today is now in the annals for posterity and a one day king is a king *[Applause]*.

Honourable Members, I want to assure you that we will enjoy in this Parliament. Let us work together as we have started demonstrating unity. The support I received from Members of the opposition is overwhelming and I felt good. I want to specifically thank the Clerk and Leader of Government Business for giving me this opportunity. They called and told me that I was going to act as Speaker. I was surprised and wondered whether I would be able to do it. I prayed over it and asked God to be with me. I asked God to speak through me and I believe he has spoken to me by His Grace. We will enjoy in this Parliament. I will say this as a policy and I will make sure I follow it to the latter *[Applause]*. I would like to point at something as Acting Speaker.

Honourable Members, I will leave you with this; 'those who have suffered much have a right to be happy' and your destiny and my destiny are in the hands of God *[Applause]*. I want to thank you for everything you have done here this morning. We would have spent a lot of time to say good things about Honourable Veronica K. Sesay, but you can do it outside. I want to appeal to the female Honourable Members to work together. We have to work with the men. We have men who are supportive to our course because they have wives, sisters and daughters. I know that any Bill that has to do with women will be supported by these men. I want to thank you again my ladies and I will not let you down. We will lead and others will follow. I thank all of you for your kind sentiments; particularly the female Members

of Parliament for this great opportunity accorded me to be a presiding officer for today's sitting.

***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 11:00 a.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.]*