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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

PARLIAMENT RATIFIES TWO AGREEMENTS ON THE THREE TOWNS WATER & SANITATION PROJECT

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Thursday 20th July 2017 debated and ratified two protocol agreements aimed at providing supplementary financing to the three towns water and sanitation project, including job creation for 120 youths and the extension of water and sanitation facilities in Makeni, Bo and Kenema.

The following agreements were approved by Parliament:

- I. “Supplementary Protocol of Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund (Supplementary Grant for the Three Towns Water and Sanitation Project) Supply and Project ID No: P-SL-E00-007, Grant No: 2100155034566 Dated 25th May 2017 and
- II. Supplementary Protocol of Agreement Between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund (On Behalf of the Transition Support Facility) (Supplementary Grant for the Three Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project) Project ID: No: P-SL-E00-007, Grant No: 5900155011851 Dated 25th May 2017

Presenting both Agreements prior to ratification, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED), Foday B.L Mansaray said among other things that the African Development Bank and the OPEC Fund originally co-financed the three towns water and sanitation project with \$62 Million. He also said that the project has attained 162 kilometer of distribution network, leaving large areas behind to the disadvantage of women and children. Both Agreements are aimed at improving and strengthening the capacity of SALWACO and the creation of jobs for youths through plumbing and to do repairs on the water and sanitation facilities of the project. He furthered that “these Agreements will provide a supplementary financing of \$1 Million to the project and a complementary contribution of \$1 Million by the Government of Sierra Leone, aimed at job creation and the provision of start-up kits for 120 youths”.

Contributing to the debate, MPs on both sides of the aisle praised President Koroma for the strategic leadership and direction he had shown to the water sector, and that the selection of youths should be drawn from the affected project areas, whilst commending Government for its commitment to salvaging the water crisis situation which hit the country sometimes ago. However, MPs called on MoFED to provide funds to the Committee on Water Resources to do oversight on the activities of SALWACO relating to the three towns water and sanitation project.

Minority Leader of the House, Hon. Dr. Bernadette Lahai described water as a “ubiquitous” commodity whose need and use regarding the survival and livelihood of the people is inexhaustible. She also raised concerns on the management, selection criteria of personnel and the provision of water to the intended beneficiaries, whilst speaking on incentives, and gender equity in the selection of youths as plumbers and technicians in line with the local content policy.

Acting Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Claude D.M Kamanda, and Chief Whip of Parliament said that both Agreements are geared toward the empowerment of 120 youths that had already been trained and are waiting to be equipped with start-up kits. That these Agreements will extend water and sanitation facilities in public places such as markets, parks and schools. He also said that “politics should be taken out of the delivery of these services”, whilst speaking on the sustainability of the project.

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