

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

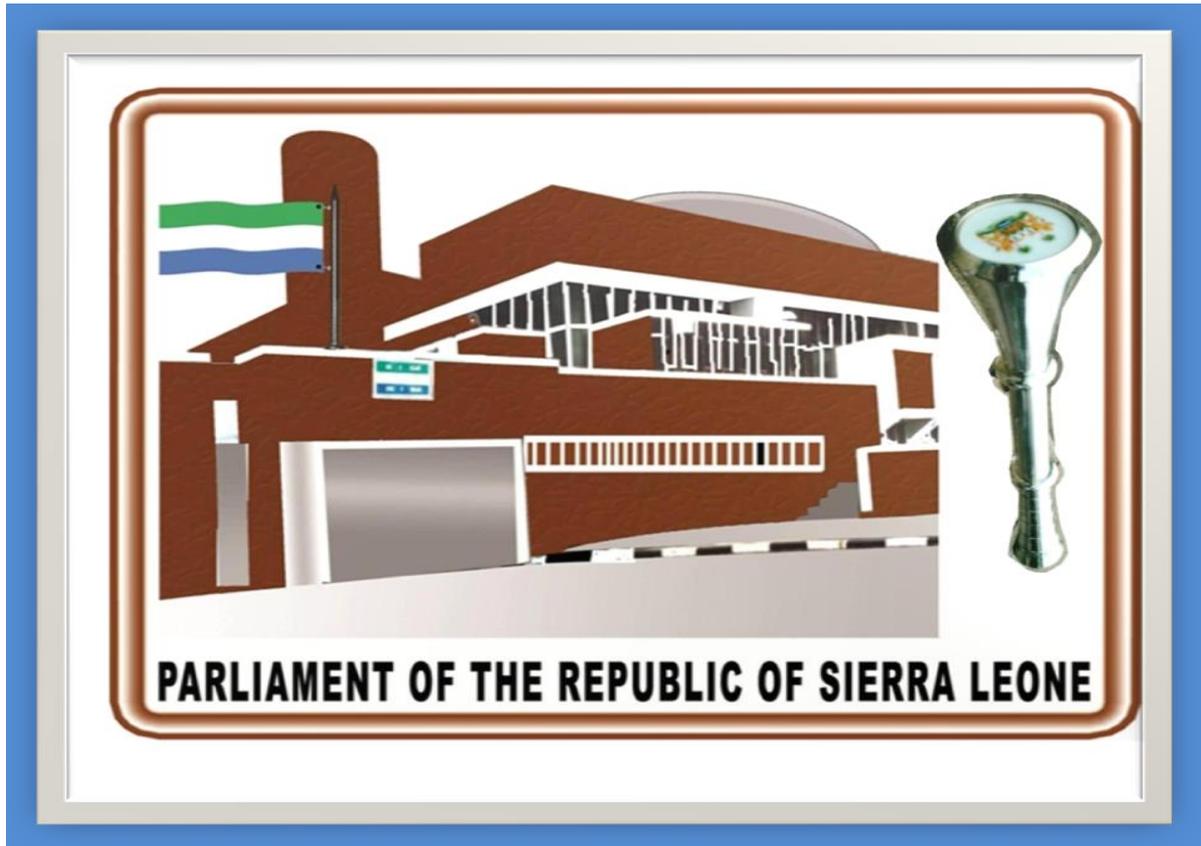
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 29TH MAY, 2018

SESSION – 2018/2019



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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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, 29th May, 2018.

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PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

Be it resolved:

“That we the Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 10th May, 2018”

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 29th May, 2018.

I. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers].

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

[The Speaker, Hon. Dr Abass Chernor Bundu, in the Chair].

The House was called to Order

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON MONDAY, 28TH MAY, 2018.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Monday, 28th May, 2018. I want to caution Honourable Members not to bother with the names. If there are mistakes, they will be corrected by the Clerk. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4, Page 5, Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? There being no comments or corrections, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Monday, 28th May, 2018 as presented?

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I so move, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Monday, 28th May, 2018 has been adopted as presented]

III. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT JULIUS MAADA BIO

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA

Be it resolved:

“That we the Members of Parliament here assembled wish to thank His Excellency the President for the Address he so graciously delivered on the occasion of State Opening of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday, 10th May, 2018”

[SECOND ALLOTTED DAY]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we shall now proceed with the second day of the debate on the Presidential Address.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a privilege and an opportunity for me to thank the President, a man

with integrity, and a man whom I believe he is going to deliver. He is a man I have lived with for several years. Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is a man who stands by his words. He talks little, but he means whatsoever he says. Therefore, I am here to tell my colleagues on the other side that Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is somebody who has got integrity and sobriety. Of course, everybody knows that he is a progressive person and he is a President for all Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President talks about persons with disabilities. This is one of the most important parts of this Speech. I am interested in this aspect of the Speech because I have lived in Norway for 18 years and Norway is one of the countries that have respect for persons with disabilities. If you go around the streets of Freetown, you will see those with disability issues suffering. Some of them are blind, some are being amputated. Today, we have a President who is not only sympathetic, but empathetic to the plights of this category of people. As Members of Parliament, we should be happy and respect what he has mentioned for persons with disabilities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I would like to talk about is education. To me and I guess for everybody in this House, education is paramount because we would not have been here without education. Therefore, if the President has thought it fit to introduce free education, I want to believe all of us should welcome it and take it seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another area that is subsumed in this Speech that is very important is the issue of dual citizenship. If you look at the current Parliament, majority of our colleagues who were here in the last Parliament are not here today because of dual citizenship which is commonly called 'two Sims.' Good and eloquent friends like Honourable Alhassan Kamara, Honourable Amadu Fofanah and many others are not here today. Some of us are not happy because of their absence. To me, they have been marginalised as if they are not Sierra Leoneans. I want to believe we are all Sierra Leoneans. They went abroad because they wanted to make ends meet and to also provide for their people in Sierra Leone. I believe they have contributed so much to this country's Economy and development. So, when the President said he was going to look into that issue, it is a welcome idea. I

am quite sure that even Dr Kandeh Kolley Yumkella will support the President's proposal [*Laughter*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there many programmes in this Speech that we need to look into. On the area of health, we know that health is wealth. When I won my parliamentary seat in the last Parliament, I went to Norway to meet my Norwegian friends, so that they could extend a helping hand to the people of my Constituency. I spoke to those whom I believed would help humanity. They responded positively and I came back to Sierra Leone with goodies for my constituents. Today, I am proud to report to this House that we have one of the best mini hospitals in my Constituency, Nomo Chiefdom. Therefore, it is important also to look at what the President is saying about the Health Sector. It is important to make sure that we do what is necessary in our constituencies by monitoring our health programmes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the challenges that we will be encountering during the course of implementing the free education agenda. This is because the free education programme is one of the flagship programmes of the President and all of us should monitor its implementation. We have to monitor any programme in our constituencies. I believe the President has good intentions for this Nation. However, I want to remind the President to also monitor his ministers and other presidential appointees. I am sending this warning to the President because sometimes the people he appoints to implement his programmes are the ones responsible for the poor performances. So, it is important for these ministers to work very hard in terms of helping the 'New Direction' to succeed. The ministers should put Sierra Leone first above all else. This is very important and those who have been appointed to positions of trust should make sure that the President's 'New Direction' agenda succeeds for the benefit of Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague on the other side was talking about atrocities. I think it is sometimes good to be honest with ourselves. In 2007, for instance, Honourable Tamba Sam was attacked at the APC Office. Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio was also attacked at Kamalo and at his residence. Again, Mr Kamaraimba Mansaray was attacked. So, what are you saying, Honourable

Members? What I have said is nothing but the truth. The SLPP women were also raped in 2007 in the SLPP Office [*Undertone*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let us try to observe and maintain decorum. S.O 35[5] should be your guide.

HON. ALUSINE KANNEH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The APC Members of Parliament do not want to hear the truth. They always like to cause violence. I want to maintain my earlier statements that the APC have committed so many atrocities. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Honourable Member. You kept yourself strictly within the ten minutes. The ten minutes roll will continue. I have a list of speakers given to me by the leaders of the various political parties. I am still waiting for the Leader of Government Business.

HON. RUGIATU R. KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, may I take this opportunity to extend my profound thanks to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for delivering his Address in this House. A lot of issues are subsumed in this Address. In other words, lots of developmental aspirations were articulated in this Speech, which I hope the President and his team will accomplish after the five years. He has to deliver because the APC will take over power in 2023.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to draw your attention to the free education policy of the President. This is not a new phenomenon in Sierra Leone. This initiative started with the late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and his successor, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. It is continuity because there was 'free education' for primary school from classes 1 to 6 and provision of uniforms for girls, especially those in JSS 1 to 3. Also, teaching and learning materials were provided to schools across the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education, if he is here, to take note of some of the issues or lessons learnt during the implementation of the 'free education policy.' If you look at the school system, we have a lot of problems even with the teachers. We have seen situations wherein the teachers have been organising extra classes and levy

exorbitant charges on parents. Those who could not afford to pay for the extra classes ended up not sending their children to school.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another thing that has been undermining the free education policy has to do with the distribution of teaching and learning materials. I am saying this because we have witnessed situations wherein school authorities and officials of the Ministry of Education usually connived with business entities to sell teaching and learning materials. This is why teaching and learning materials are sold in the market. So, for the free education policy to succeed, I want to recommend here that strategies are put in place in order to ensure that the teaching and learning materials get to the end users. You need to work closely with the school governance structures and even collaborate with the local communities. We have the Mothers Club or Mothers Support Group, the Children's Parliament, Community Teachers Association [CTA], the School Management Committees and many other groups. These are some of the structures you could work with, if you want to succeed.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the teachers. In his Address, he talks about the paucity of trained and qualified teachers. If the free education policy is to succeed, we must have trained and qualified teachers to give out their best to our children. The former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, through the Ministry of Education, did a tremendous work by expunging ghost teachers from the payroll. Ghost teachers have been weeded out of the system and those with fake certificates have been removed out of the system. Therefore, my recommendations are:

- assessment of the teachers nationwide. There are lots of teachers that have taught for the past five to ten years without being appraised for onward promotion. They have been stagnated for too long. You have to appraise and promote teachers who are due for promotion. This is one of the ways you motivate your workers;
- teachers' approval. We have a lot of teachers who have taught for the past five to ten years without being approved. Well, the former government was cleaning

the payroll and setting the pace for this time. So, those teachers who have taught for many years without approval should be approved this time; and

- another area is the salaries of teachers. There is need to review salaries of teachers if we want them to give their best. Most of these teachers are in the classrooms because they have no alternative. But I want to inform this House that we have trained and qualified teachers in the districts or provincial headquarter towns. Those teachers are looking for lucrative jobs and opportunities to go out of the system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the former government did very well in terms of improving the salaries of teachers. Today, a teacher can boast of a take home pay of **Le500, 000** and above, which is a good thing. If the free education policy is to succeed, then you need to look at the teachers' salary. You have to review the teachers' salary and make their conditions of service more attractive, lucrative and competitive, so that they can stay in the classroom and give their best.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, providing the requisite trainings for teachers is also important. We need to train more teachers. I want to remind Members of Parliament that access is not quality. Access to poor quality is tantamount to no access at all. So, if we want our children to get their best education, then we must train the teachers and the training should not only be limited to the universities and the teachers' training colleges, but also those who are already in the school system. They need to upgrade their pedagogical skills. They need professional trainer to provide in-service training of teachers if we are to succeed. Also, when the President made the pronouncement for the commencement of the free education policy in September, 2018 I was bit worried. We have to look at the timeframe the free education is going to kick-start. Mr Speaker, there will be influx of children into the schools when this programme starts in September. Are we prepared for it? Do we have the facilities? Do we have the furniture? These are some of the questions we need to ask ourselves. Between July 2016 and July, 2017, the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, constructed schools across the country to support the free education policy and to minimise the issue of overcrowding in

schools. I want you to check with the working group at the Ministry of Education. They have all the facts.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now move to women's empowerment. I would like to first of all talk about women's economic empowerment. Often a time women have been refused loans from commercial banks maybe they did have collateral. Sometimes when you look at the women, they have good or better repayment plans than the men; but because they are women, they are denied this facility. So, in the new direction as espoused by the President, economic empowerment for women is a challenge in this country. We are expecting the President to work with banking institutions to ensure that capable and credible women are provided with loans.

THE SPEAKER: I would like to acknowledge the eloquence of the Honourable Member, but I wish to remind her that I have been more than generous.

HON. RUGIATU R. KANU: Noted, Mr Speaker. Before I take my seat, as a mother, I would like to look at children and the commitment of the presidential Speech on children. He highlighted a lot of issues like forced marriage, teenage pregnancy and child trafficking. These are issues that are also impacting the education of the girl child. As a mother, I have a passion for children, especially the girl child.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to advise the Ministry of Education, the Households and other stakeholders to review the 2004 Education Act. The Act has to be reviewed in order to synchronise these issues and work towards addressing them. In fact, there is a report from UNICEF 'on out of school studies.' Most of these issues highlighted here are also issues identified as responsible for children to drop out of schools. So, if you could read that report, there are strategies and mechanisms that have been put in place to address some of these issues. So, you can look that document and implement some of these activities. I thank you
[Applause].

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her very brilliant contribution. I call on Honourable Alpha Bah to take the Floor.

HON. ALPHA A. BAH: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I wish you a blessed Tuesday morning. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a very important moment in the governance structure or governance processes of this country. We all know that Parliament is quite embedded in the governance framework of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must commend His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for the Address he delivered in this House. I must acknowledge the efforts of the authors of this document. Examining the presidential Address is an integral part in moving this Nation forward. Therefore, I beg to differ from those who said we need to give the Government more time in order to enable us see what they have done. This is because there are policies, proposals and commitments made in this Address by the President. Therefore, it is but fitting at this material time to assess the commitments made in this document. And in doing so, we should focus on the feasibility, measurability and achievability of all the issues incorporated in this Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our role in this debate is to question what the President intends to do, proffer strategies and solutions on how he should go about it. We have to raise the challenges they will encounter in the course of delivering on the numerous promises outlined in this Address. It is on that note I want to humbly refer this House to Pages 30 to 31, Paragraphs 116 to 117 of the President's Address to this House. In these paragraphs, the President admitted and acknowledged the problems faced in land distribution, land allocation and land management. It is evident that all of us have been spectators to bad land management over decades now.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Paragraph 117, the President pointed out the attendant consequences of these problems. The President spoke about congestion, environmental risk and challenges. However, even though the President conceded that there are problems affecting land management, I was perplexed when the President proposed to remove the Environment Protection Agency [EPA] from the Office of the President and place it under the supervision of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and the Environment. I will categorically submit here that the President

should not go ahead with that proposal for the following reasons: first, the practice nowadays is for governments to ensure that certain broad areas that have constituent programmes are divorced, so that the needed time, expertise and attention are given to every component of the governance structure *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must, however, admit here that the President's initiative to separate the Ministry of Finance from Economic Planning and Development is a laudable venture. I want to commend him for that initiative, but I would have expected the President to have considered upgrading the Directorate of the Environment in the Ministry of Lands and fuse it with the EPA in order to give way for the creation of a special ministry that will be dealing with environmental issues instead of removing the EPA from State House to Ministry of Lands. If we have a land Minister who might have formulated a bad land policy leading to certain environmental challenges, that will bring conflict to his position.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the late Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabba supervised the National Aids Secretariat when he was President of this Nation and we saw the results produced by his supervision. May God bless him. I want to state here the original intention of subsuming the EPA under the office of the State House was to ensure that the EPA performs better through close supervision. Well, there may be political interference along the line, but we are humans and sometimes we learn from our mistakes. We acknowledge the fact that there were challenges along the line, but we must not be oblivious of the original intention of that situation. Originally, it was intended to harness the needed time, expertise and attention that would produce the required results.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if at all His Excellency wishes to go ahead with his plans, he must not do that in a rush. As an alternative, I want to suggest here that the President should undertake a comprehensive cross examination of detaching the EPA from the Office of the President to the Ministry of Lands. Before this proposal takes place, I want to inform this House that what is needed in running that Agency is the 'political will.' It can be recalibrated with the required 'political will.' We have seen how lands are being allocated to people along the highways, the right of way, forest reserves and bridges. This poses serious environmental

challenge to the people of Sierra Leone. Therefore, if we have a situation of including three important components under the Ministry of Lands, I am afraid we will get to a situation wherein we will gradually lose the gains we have made over the years. In fact, the Agency can work closely with the Directorate of the Environment in the Ministry of Lands. They should work towards addressing environmental challenges in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stated earlier that His Excellency the President acknowledged the problem of congestion and in addressing that problem, the President spoke about commencing ongoing road projects and he earmarked certain road projects that he intends to start in the South-Eastern Province of Sierra Leone. But S.O [2] 'me nar eastern man,' but I am disappointed because the President failed to mention the Hill-Side Bypass Road that links the East end part to the Western part of Freetown. The President should have lauded the efforts of the former government and at least earmarked the laudable roads projects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have serious traffic congestion in Freetown, especially in the East end. This has been a perennial problem in Freetown. I want to inform this House that we in the East end part of Freetown feel neglected and abandoned. That is the message from the people of Constituency 115. I do not know whether it is because they normally say the people in the East end part of Freetown are pro-APC, but I want to state here that there are SLPP supporters in Low-cost Housing, Fullah Town and Calaba Town. I must hasten to say that we in the East end part of Freetown feel neglected. I thank you very much and God bless you [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I now give the Floor to Honourable Mustapha Sellu.

HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my very self and my constituents, I want to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for a well delivered Speech on the 10th May, 2018. This was the type of leader this country has been yearning for over the years; a leader who is disciplined, focused and efficient. Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio has delivered a Speech and we are here to look at what he has presented to this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to focus on three sectors. Sierra Leone has about 750 kilometre coastal line with a sizeable average of 25 kilometres square. If these areas were tackled by the past regime, honestly we would have had a diversified and a boomed Economy. We would have a buoyant Economy for the next ten years; but because these areas were neglected or because lip service were paid to these areas, that was why we encountered serious economic malaise. This is why we find ourselves where we are as a nation.

On this note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start with Marine Resources. I want to thank the female Honourable Member who has just spoken. She highlighted various issues and even attempted to proffer recommendations. I want to look at it from a logical point of view because the debate cannot end without the Ministers. With your permission, the President has delivered his Speech and we have to guide the political will, especially the ministers, who are charged with the responsibility of implementing the issues raised in this Speech. This is because if the ministers are not on the side of the President, he will not deliver on his promises. The ministers and the finances are going to build the inputs because we want to see an average and achievable output at the end of day. As parliamentarians, we have to perform our oversight role in this case, so that we support the President achieves his dreams.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 3, Paragraph 11 of the Speech, which talks about Marine Resources. The marine sector earns this country **\$100mIn** annually, for which there has been a huge loss in this country since the past regime took over the governance of this country. What the 'New Direction' is going to do is to ensure that this **\$100mIn** is remitted into the consolidated fund. If this is done, our economic basket will increase and there will be more jobs for our people. If the Marine Sector is treated with seriousness, over 2000 people will be employed directly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at mineral resources. This is the most crucial and critical sector of the Presidential Speech. In the recent past, we have been paying much attention to mineral resources because that has been the area where the Government increases its revenue; but due to the manner in which

we issue out licences to mining companies, mismanagement of revenue generated and how indigenes of the lands where these mining companies operated are being treated, we have not been able to benefit from that sector. Part 5, Section 34[a] of the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009 states: **"A land lease or other rites to use land obtained holder or a large scale mining licence shall be subject to surface rent."** This is not feasible in this country. The 'New Direction is saying these provisions in the 2009 Mines and Minerals Act are going to be reviewed to reflect the actual picture of the people in those communities. There is going to be a fair composition of land owners in these mining communities we find ourselves. For instance, I am coming from a constituency where the Sierra Rutile Mining Company is operating. I want to inform this House that there has been no fair share of the proceeds realised from their lands. In other words, the people have not been able to get the required compensation for the crops and buildings being destroyed by these companies. That is what the 'New Direction' is going to look at very seriously.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the document before us is a proposal and all of us need to provide the necessary oversight to all MDAs that are going to implement these projects. This will help us achieve these goals as a Nation. It is not time yet for criticisms. We should focus our attention on how we can put all hands on deck, so that what is written in this Speech is achieved. We have to provide oversight role as Members of Parliament. If you go to these mining areas, you will realise that the local inhabitants are not benefiting as expected. If you go to Kono, S.O [2]. Kono is like 'wen den dae bit flawa na mata odo at di end of di day you see ol the flawa na di mata odo e mot, bot the mata odo no dea get wetin e fo get, den dae troway.' That is what has been happening in this country. If you go to these mining communities, there is nothing to write home about. These are areas where the diamonds and other precious minerals are coming from. So, the 'New Direction' is going to close the leakages and other issues spotted during the past regime. They have done their bit because every government has its own agenda they want to pursue. The APC agenda focused more on infrastructure and other sectors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the time when the Economy of this country was in a very good shape, that would have been the best time for the then

government to diversify our Economy, but that never happened in the history of this country. Instead, we relied solely on the revenue generated from mineral resources; and when we had economic shock, we know where we have landed. So, I am encouraging all of us, especially our colleagues on the other side, to give support by critiquing this Speech and providing recommendations as to how we can move this Nation forward. This is a proposal and we are here to look at possible ways of implementing this document. We are expected to work together for the benefit of all of us. The APC programmes have been implemented, but we have identified some gaps during the course of implementing their programmes. This is why the President has come up with this kind of Address, so that we work towards mitigating some of the challenges encountered by the APC led government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move to youth. The former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, has said in most of the speeches he delivered in the Well of Parliament and outside Parliament that he would lay his life for the youth, but we have not seen much of that. He said he would lay his life for the youth, which was a very good move, but the implementation of that statement has been the problem. This is because you can say you will do something for the youth at the end of the day, the youth are still untrained and unqualified to take jobs. So, the 'New Direction' is going to at look at the gaps within the programmes you have implemented and work towards correcting them. We want to take them forward for the betterment of this nation. If you look at this document, you will find out that **33%** of this country's population is made up of youth, **67%** of them are unemployed. This means they cannot access the job market simply because the past regime did not pay attention to technical and vocational institutes that would have enable them gain technical skills. That area was not given much attention to because they cannot yield dividend or immediate benefit for them. That could be a reason we focused on our mineral resources. Therefore, the 'New Direction' is going to institute technical vocational training centres to strengthen the middle level man power in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind my colleagues that not everybody has the education to come to Parliament and articulate issues. Again, not

everybody has the potential to occupy offices, but the middle level manpower must be strengthened by providing technical skills to our youth. We have to provide technical skills to our youth. We will be focusing our attention directly to some of the mistakes made by the past regime and this Speech is very clear on that. In that regard, I want to implore all of us to support this document. I want to remind my colleagues that without positive opposition, we cannot deliver on the promises we have made and all of us will fail abysmally. This Speech is not about the President, it is about the people and progress of this Nation. Therefore, let us support the ministers and provide our oversight roles, so that we can move this country forward. The President is going to do his best to ensure that he supports them, but we should also provide our technical supports to them so that they can succeed.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to wrap up my Speech by imploring all of you on the other side to support the 'New Direction' agenda, so that we succeed. I thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to Honourable Sahr Charles.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must say that today is a happy day for me. We are here today to continue the debate we have started yesterday on the President's Address. I want to start by extending my profound thanks to the President for delivering this brilliant speech in this House. Indeed, this is not the first time Sierra Leoneans are being thrilled by beautiful speeches and I want to believe that the words that he carved in his 'New Direction Peoples' Manifesto are not strange words to the people of Sierra Leone. We have heard similar words like, disciplined leadership, efficiency, attitudinal and behavioural change, Sierra Leone will prosper, etc. All of these words have been sounded in the ears of Sierra Leoneans, but to our dismay, all these words have not been put to reality. I hope this President meant those words. I want to believe our problem in Sierra Leone as a nation spans from the lack of the virtues he mentioned in this Speech. But I want to believe these virtues are the underlying principles of his New Direction.' We have not seen discipline in leadership in this country and I want the President to know that if the 'New Direction' is to succeed, he must strive very hard

to live up to those underlying principles; otherwise, after five years from now, the people of this country will use that as the benchmark to grade his tenure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the presidential Speech is well written and one is tempted to say, we do not need to debate it at all, but to give the President the go ahead with his programmes. But again, we must be careful and it is in lieu of this I was moved by key aspects of the Speech that requires critical attention. The first point I would like to draw your attention to is Agriculture. Paragraphs 5 to 10 of the Speech are very comprehensive in giving statistical analyses of the agricultural sector and the present state of Sierra Leone's food security. I am very impressed with that. It tells us that he is abreast with the situation. The people of Sierra Leone are not ready to listen to excuses come 2023 because he knows it and he has provided indices from various organisations that deal with food security. This is the time we must be careful as politicians in terms of what we say or do. It is high time we realised that politics is no more business as usual. It is no longer a situation where people talk a lot without action. We want to see what we say and also see what we put on paper. We want to see tangibles and actions. We should know that Sierra Leoneans are wise and they can change at any time. At first, the politicians used to fool the people, but I believe the just concluded general elections clearly tell us that the people are wise. The trend has changed and this not the first time we have had assurances from politicians or successive governments that Sierra Leone would become a food sufficient Nation. We have had this many times, but where are we today? We keep asking ourselves what is wrong with us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, successive governments knew the problems of this country. I want to believe the late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba assured Sierra Leoneans of food security towards 2007, but that did not materialise. Again, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma made some promises in the agricultural sector, but did not materialise. I will want to draw the attention of His Excellency and his Cabinet ministers to some of the problems responsible for the failure of Sierra Leone achieving her food security. First, poor motivation of farmers; farming is no more attractive because majority of the able bodied men have run from their farming communities to the cities.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, lack of accountability is a very serious issue. Much attention has not been paid to some of the lapses in the agriculture sector. This is very important and the 'New Direction' must look into those lapses. Also, political interference is another challenge. The Ministry of Agriculture has not been able to achieve its goal of producing sufficient food to the people of this country due to political interference. Politics should be taken out of the agricultural sector. For example, I was told that the soil that was tested for ADAX Bioenergy to start operation in Sierra Leone was taken from Kono District, but the project was implemented in the North due to political interference. We need to take that into consideration. Tractors, tools and implements meant for the growth of agriculture are sometimes distributed based on political consideration. We need to put that aside and be serious about what we do. Let us put Sierra Leone first.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw the attention of this Honourable House and the Nation to Paragraphs 24 and 26 of the President's Speech, where he talks about mines and mineral resources. This is very important and the President states the need for the Mines and Mineral Act of 2009 and other mining lease Agreements to be reviewed. I want to applaud him for that bold step. However, I am afraid if Sierra Leone will not be going round the same circle because we do not want a situation where this document is reviewed in the interest of the political party. If these laws are going to be reviewed, it should be done in the interest of the people of Sierra Leone. We want the people of this country to benefit because we have seen mining Agreements being signed by previous Governments that have not benefitted the people of this country.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I would ask you to conclude, but I know this particular topic is closest to your heart.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know exactly what it means to come from a diamondiferous area like Kono District. For instance, I have seen it all and even felt it. I know exactly the problems the people in those communities are facing. For instance, the OCTEA Mining Company is a multinational company that has operated for a very long time in Kono District, but it has not been able to point at any tangible development as part of its Cooperate Social Responsibility. These are

issues of great concern and if the mining Agreements and mining policies are going to be reviewed, this is one of the areas I want the Government to pay attention to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to conclude my contribution by drawing the attention of this Honourable House to Education. Of course, I have been a teacher and a teacher trainer and I know exactly the constraints teachers are going through. I am very impressed with the provisions encapsulated in this Address. The President has promised to boost the morale of teachers in this country. We hope that the two ministers of Education will work towards the achievement of these promises. With those few words, I want to thank you very much.

HON. FODAY M. KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am glad for this opportunity. On behalf of the National Grand Coalition [NGC], I would like to thank His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio for this brilliant speech. After the President delivered his speech, the NGC Members of Parliament went to our office and we were very impressed. We were not only impressed, but very happy. We accepted the document and we will participate to make sure that the President succeeds. We will do that if we know more about what he said. We do not want to follow blindly. We have to be amongst the dancers and take active part. To be part of it, we have to talk about what we do not understand. If we have misgivings about something, we have to highlight them for us to achieve our goals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we Members of Parliament should checkmate the activities of the ministers who will be implementing what is contained in this Speech. I am not going to say much. I am going to talk about the Economy and Education. On the area of the Economy, I am going to discuss about the Treasury Single Account [TSA]. For now, it is good and we are very happy. To me, the TSA is going to get rid of what we called 'monkey woke baboon eat,' S. O. [2]. If we have different accounts, there will be leakages. There is only one thing I want to say about the TSA, which I would want you to take into consideration. I was in a particular office and somebody was telling me that the quarterly allocation had not been remitted into their account. I want to state here that there are institutions that generate revenue and that revenue has to be transfer into the TSA. Some of these

institutions need funds to enable them operate effectively and efficiently. We hope that these institutions will not fall into the usual traditional bureaucracy of delaying their allocations. If what they need to operate is delayed, then they will not operate well. What we have started seeing coming into the TSA will also be delayed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next issue I want to discuss is education. We all know that education is not only paramount, but it is critical in building a cohesive and prosperous country. So, it is not good for us to pay lip service to this particular aspect of our lives. A colleague Honourable Member was talking about the timing of the free education agenda. This is very important and we have to look at it critically. We know that have had 'free education' in Sierra Leone for quite a while now for primary and girls in Junior Secondary Schools [JSS]. The misgiving is that the 'free education policy for primary schools came separately and the 'free education policy for girls at the JSS level came after; but as far as we are concerned, what we have been seeing is that the past Government has not been able to properly implement the free education policy because the schools depended on subsidies. These subsidies were not coming on time and for that the schools were demanding extra moneys from the parents. The idea is to pay back when the subsidies are available, but this never happened.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if 'free education' has already started for primary schools and girls in JSS level but did not succeed, do we think bringing 'free education' for every child will succeed? We should have asked certain questions like, why the 'free education' policy for primary schools and girls in JSS did not succeed. Why and where did we go wrong? This means this Parliament is entitled to a blueprint of this programme. We are part of it and we should accept it because it is good for the future of this country. One very important question we should ask ourselves is what is the package? This is because saying 'free education' is not enough. What is really 'free' in this policy? Do you think the President was referring to the tuition fees alone, books and food? We know that there must be some explanations that describe everything, but before implementation of that policy starts, I want to state here that the blueprint is available to this Parliament. So, we have to read and contribute to see what is possible and what is not possible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 'free education' policy should have divided into three phases. I want to believe that government is continuity. We have to look at what has happened in the past whether this policy worked well or not. Again, some of us would like to know if the 'free education' programme is going to be funded by either the IMF or the World Bank. If my speculations are correct, it will increase the debts burden of the country.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President once again. I want to state here that we want to participate and we are ready to do so. Honourable Members of the NGC are impressed and we will only participate if we fully understand what he wants to do. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. DR ROLAND KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to speak on the Motion of thanks to His Excellency the President, for delivering a gracious Speech in this House on Thursday, 10th May, 2018. This is a very good Speech and very comprehensive because it covers every area. It is an ambitious Speech because he has the courage to go into the depth of some of the areas mentioned. I think when we want to talk in a situation like this, especially with regards to governance, we have to first of all say thanks for whatever little someone has done which has given us the foundation from where you start your work. That is a normal etiquette that we recognise the work that has already been done as a solid foundation the President is going to build on. It is no harm saying that because you are not going to be judged by what others did, but you are going to be judged by what you will do in your office. His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio's Speech was written to fit into the President's New Direction Manifesto. The content of this Speech was designed to fit into the promises he made during his campaign.

In my opinion, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President went too wide off the mark. I am going to take just a few examples because other Members of Parliament have spoken about many things that are in this Address and looking at them again will sound repetitious. I would want to look at three areas; i.e., Education, Agriculture and Parliament. I would like to start with the 6334, now 6344. Well, we are about to reverse to the 6334. The history is that due to abysmal

performances of pupils in public examinations in 2008, the then President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, set up a Commission known as the Professor Gbamanja Commission to look into the issues affecting our educational system. The Commission sat to investigate the reasons for the dismal performance of pupils in public examinations. The Chairman of the Commission, Professor Gbamanja, came out with a report which the then Government published a White Paper. There were recommendations made in that report for short, medium and long terms solutions. One of the short term recommendations was that the time pupils spent in Senior Secondary School was too short and it should be extended by one year. A committee was constituted to go round the country and sound the opinions of the professionals in the teaching field. The Committee concluded that exercise and endorsed the recommendations of the Gbamanja Report that an additional year was necessary. I am not assessing the merits or demerits of the additional year, what I am saying here is that due process was followed to get where we are [*Undertones*]. That is democracy; and in a democracy, policies processes and procedures have to be followed. However, what we are seeing now are Executive Orders.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when His Excellency was addressing Parliament, he spoke about 'free education' policy that would be implemented in September, 2018. He said we would go back to the 6334 System. We have no problem going back to the 6334 System, but it has to be done democratically. Let us go back and sound the opinions of people to see whether it is their wish for us to go back to the 6334 System of education. The people of this country have to give their consent before we go back to the old system. This is a democratic state and we should respect democratic processes. This brings me to the 'free education' policy which has been spoken about by many people. I like the last speaker who spoke on issues that are relevant to the success of the 'free education.' We have a host of difficulties in the educational sector and those challenges should be addressed before the implementation of the 'free education' policy. This is not a situation wherein somebody will sleep today and tell us the next day about a cosmetic 'free education.' We must look at the challenges before we go ahead. There are many qualified teachers qualify who have been teaching for the past five to six years as volunteer

without being approved. Their files are still gathering dust and we have to look at their issue as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are hundreds of schools that have not been approved. I would like to share an experience I had before I came to Parliament. I am representing Constituency 064 and I was covering Thambaka and Sella Limba Chiefdom in the Karene District. Mr Speaker, before I came to Parliament, I was an NGO Executive. When I visited Thambaka, the Paramount Chief told me that the most urgent problem that needed to be addressed was education. The villages in that part of the country are far apart. I told them that I would help them; within eight years, we built 47 standard schools and even trained over 150 teachers in the distant training programme. Two years ago, we applied for the first five schools to be approved and the files are still gathering dust in the Ministry of Education. Forty-seven [47] schools were built by Non-Governmental Organisations and trained over 150 teachers. These are people that need to receive education as well because they are Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must state here here that the APC Government supported the construction of 47 schools and trained over 150 teachers. What we need is to have a Government that will work towards clearing the backlog in terms of having these schools and teachers to be approved. The teachers should be on Government payroll and also work towards addressing these challenges before the commencement of the 'free education.'

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am getting enthralled, but I want to remind you to wind up.

HON. DR ROLAND KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I have said earlier, governance is building upon building blocks. This means that when one political party does one thing, we expect the next to do the next thing. I am saying that there are many issues we need to address before we come to the implementation of the 'free education.' If we fail to address them now; i.e., training of the teachers and putting them on the payroll, providing teaching and learning materials and resolving the issue of private schools, we will find ourselves in the same quagmire. Private schools are going to be the problem in the future because private schools are

building a strong class society and widening the gap between 'haves' and 'have not.' The 'have not' will be sending their children to the public schools, whilst the 'haves' will be sending their children to expensive private schools and will get good education. There is a class structure that can lead to revolution in future.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say few things on Agriculture. We have been hearing about mechanisation or mechanised farming. It is very good and I am in support of it, but I want you to remember that **70%** of our people in this country are farmers. While we address mechanisation, we must also address the peasant farmers.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sure you will commend me for being over generous.

HON. DR ROLAND KARGBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker I will wind up in a minute.

THE SPEAKER: I want you to note that I have a growing list of speakers.

HON. DR ROLAND KARGBO: Mr Speaker, I may be wrong, but I stand to be corrected that this Speech did not say anything about the role of Parliament in this dispensation. I want to believe that if the programmes in this document are going to succeed, then the input of Parliament is very important. I want those who prepared this document to go back and insert clearly the role of Parliament in terms of monitoring or overseeing the implementation of these programmes. I thank you, Mr Speaker for your generosity.

HON. JOSEPH A. B. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to extend my hearty felicitation to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for his comprehensive intended action plan submitted to this House. I want to emphasise the phrase, 'intended action plan' in order to inform my colleagues that this document has not been actualised yet. It is an intention and I do not want you to say, 'action pass intention,' S. O. [2].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to be very practical in addressing some of the issues raised in this document. I want to start with electricity. The provision of electricity my colleagues on the other side are celebrating about speaks volumes. S. O. [2], Mr Speaker, 'wae a contractor build os den di os fɔdɔm after completion of its

construction, na tu tin dem involve,' either there was a criminal act of not using the appropriate materials or he may not have the appropriate skills to build a better house or both. This means that if from the 'Agenda for Change' and the 'Agenda for Prosperity' prioritised the electrification of this country, especially the urban cities have failed after ten years, are you expecting the 'New Direction' to provide electricity in less than two months? The current blackouts we are experiencing speak volumes about their ineptitude in providing sustainable electricity supply for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move on to another key sector that has brought all of us to this House; i.e., education. I consider education as the propeller of development and prosperity. A lot of commitments have been made in the past and will even borrow some from the 'Agenda of Prosperity' to improve on education. Frankly speaking, education is at the brink of collapse in Sierra Leone. I want to summarily describe the educational situation in Sierra Leone as one under serious threat. In the first place, we have low quality of education at all levels. Some of us can attest to the fact that we have not got enough teachers in our primary schools. We do not also have enough schools and that is why several pupils cluster at one desk to take public examination. These are serious challenges that are affecting the quality of our education.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have also been hearing colleagues commending the former Minister of Education who has been busy chasing ghost teachers, ghost schools and ghost pupils. We have also been told that the former Minister was able to recover **Le 7mln** on a monthly basis from ghost teachers. If that was done in sincerity, I want to say he was a good Minister, he could have used those moneys he recovered from ghost teachers to get qualified teachers who have not been on the payroll to be approved. The problems we inherited will continue to affect the quality of education in this country. No teacher can move to the rural communities if he or she is not on salary. I want you to understand that what we are discussing here is a critical analysis of the 'Agenda for Prosperity' in pursuant of educational development that has been reviewed and the recommendations are now captured in

the New Direction. The 'New Direction' is merely correcting the anomalies that have not been corrected for the past ten years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, to develop our educational system and make it accessible, it involves money. This is why the President took the first initiative and commitment to increase budgetary allocation to the educational sector. With all these plans on the table, we need adequate resources because without adequate resources, we will not be able to put them into action. Apart from that we are also talking about providing adequate educational infrastructure. If you look at the handling over notes of the former President, he said he was aspiring to construct 500 educational structures, but we have seen an NGO struggling to construct 225 schools. This could mean the infrastructure for educational purposes was not properly prioritised. For those who have had the privilege to travel from Bo to Matotoka, they must have seen the dilapidated condition of the Government Secondary School in my Constituency, Koyema to be precise.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the residence of the Principal of that school looks like a wooden house being abandoned in a war situation. The mattresses the children are sleeping on are made from raw grass materials and those mattresses have lasted for over ten years. They were provided after the war. If you talk about democratisation of educational opportunities, what can you say about this situation? As we speak, the supplier for the Koyema Secondary School is from the Tonkolili District headquarters of the Minister of Education. Is that decentralisation? Koyema is in Bo District, but the question is why should Koyema be serviced from Tonkolili District? That is corruption, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are also talking about lack of governance and management capacity of the educational sector and all of us can attest to that. We have problems with our hostels in the Universities. You have deprived the students of this nation the opportunity to live on campus and enjoy hostel life. Majority of us went to Fourah Bay College and you know how we used to enjoy being in campus. As we speak, students are perishing in terms of going to Fourah Bay College to attend lectures. You have signed a contract to provide a conducive learning environment for students, but that contract has taken three years without headway.

To me, this is the longest contract I cannot imagine. All of us are familiar with this problem and that is why I am appealing to all of us for practicality. I am saying that even in Freetown, which is the capital city, we still have infrastructural challenges. It is against this backdrop that the 'New Direction' has proffered solutions and put appropriate structures in place to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of these policies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer you to Paragraphs 56 and 57 on provisions made to motivate teachers. Also, I want to refer the House to Paragraph 50, which talks about the infrastructure that has been put in place by the 'New Direction' to provide primary schools at Ward, Chiefdom and Constituency levels.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to comment on fears that have been expressed by Honourable Members. Somebody was saying that no political will has been noticed in the New Direction. I want to tell you that the leadership of the 'new Direction' is one that is God fearing. Therefore, the President does not want to undertake any political witch hunting and that is why we are looking for adequate information to enable us to present any suspect on corrupt activities.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to all of you because this being an intended policy action, could not be implemented by the President alone. We are counting on your sincere cooperation not forgetting the oath we took in this Well of Parliament to serve the people of Sierra Leone and do justice to whatever we are doing. I thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to first of all thank the Speaker for the opportunity to debate in this House. I also want to thank the Leadership of this House. I want to acknowledge the fact that I am lucky to hail from the District where the Speaker hails from though he is now permanently transferred to Karene District.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, for the benefit of this Honourable House, that is partially correct. I am a descendant of Port Loko District by birth and now a member of Karene District by legislation.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: I want to say a big thank you to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for his maiden speech he delivered in this House on Thursday, 10th May, 2018. I was able to go through the Speech and I identified some grey areas which I would like to discuss. The President spoke about disciplined leadership in his Address. I want to ask the President what he has done towards what happened after the elections. An OSD Officer was killed in Kenema, but what has the leadership of the 'New Direction' done in that direction? Again, there are press releases from the Office of the President without the notification of the President. Those public notices have created problems for our people. The most recent one came from the Secretary to the President which was very embarrassing. This is unacceptable, Mr Speaker. I want to commend the President for reminding the civil servants that they should be in their offices at 8:30.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move to Information Communication Technology [ICT]. If ICT is fully utilised, it is a catalyst for the development of this country. Sierra Leone is one of the countries that is ready to utilise ICT facility. The 'New Direction' is lucky because you guys have inherited the fibre optic from the APC led Government and we are expecting you to properly utilise it, so that we develop the educational sector through the introduction of e-education and e-health learning processes. I do not want you to utilise it only on social media as stated in this Address.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the use of the word 'guys' is not parliamentary.

HON. ABDUL L. SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to believe that if the fibre optic is properly utilised, the tariff levied by our telecoms will drastically reduce. I hope the Minister of Information and Communications is here to listen. He should pay attention to this because we cannot use fibre and we are still charged exorbitantly. The ICT facilities should not only be provided within the peripheries of the cities and big towns. I want to believe even those in the least villages should also enjoy this facility. We did well as a Government and you should continue from where we have stopped.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about youth. The ex-President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma was very passionate about youth development. This is why some of us are in this House to represent our people and our political party. I am expecting the 'New Direction' to pay more emphasis on youth development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want my colleagues on the other side and the President to focus on key areas that will help the youth of this country. First, all districts in Sierra Leone should have Youth Farms. If this is done, it will help to reduce the rate of unemployment in this country. Today, we are talking about 'Ataya Bases.' I believe the Government should create a platform wherein those who love to sit in the Ataya Bases are engaged, so that they can make themselves productive.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and I hope the SLPP led Government will work very hard because we are going to take the leadership of this country in 2023. The APC Government will come again and perform miracles for the people of this country. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now move the pendulum from the empowerment of youth to the empowerment of women.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I did not know my name was going to come up so soon. Once again, I thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of my constituents in Bo District, Kakua Chiefdom, I want to use this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President for the Speech he so graciously delivered in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like others have already said, this Speech is rich in contents. This Speech is invigorating because it gives hope to Sierra Leoneans. Frankly speaking, there is nothing much to criticise at this time because His Excellency the President does not want to come to this Parliament next year and start stammering about what he has said. I know him to be a disciplinarian. He is somebody that says things that are achievable. All what is here is something that we often say, 'you bite what you can chew.' He knows that he will achieve what he has put in this document. So, I have no iota of doubt that he will achieve what have been written in this Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take us aback and reflect on how Sierra Leone was before this time. We used to enjoy a lot of good things like our produce from agriculture, governance and education [*Undertones*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let give her the benefit of the doubt? She has mentioned agriculture and governance, which are contained in this Speech.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. The reason why I have decided to take us aback is because it is good to compare the past and the present. We know that a lot of things went down the drains in the last ten years. In our geography lessons in schools, Sierra Leone used to export rice, ginger, groundnuts, palm oil, piassava, etc. In other words, I am trying to remind this Honourable House that agriculture used to contribute viably to the bread basket of this country. Over the years, I do not know the policies being put in place, but the lip service was too much. We have heard about the green revolution in this country, but the question is what benefit did that bring to this country? We are yet to analyse these things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, agriculture is very important because food is life and we should not joke about it. People are hungry in this country. We are representing our people in different constituencies and we are supposed to be the mouth-piece of our people. God endowed this country with a very fertile soil. We have the potential to develop a very good agricultural baseline in this country. Why have we decided to go down the drains? Why are we not exporting groundnuts and other produce anymore? Why are we not exporting the palm nuts we used to export? In fact, we used to export rice as well. There are people in this House who can attest to the fact that Sierra Leone used to export rice because we utilised the land that we have properly. We had the Tormabom in the South and Rokupr in the North. We used to produce rice in those areas to feed this country and even export enough to other countries. We need to revisit our implementation plans. We want our people to go to bed well fed. Eighty per cent [**80%**] of our people go to bed hungry. If you look at this document, you will find out that our President is so passionate about agriculture and he wants to see Sierra Leoneans enjoy good food.

I am sure we are going to support him through the different line ministries and other MDAs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about education. When we were approving the ministers in this Well, I made one or two passionate appeal to the Ministers of Education and I am still very passionate about what I told them. I told them that giving lip service is not good for our people. We must be sincere to ourselves and the people we represent. I was a teacher and I taught for fourteen years before coming to politics. This means I know exactly what it means to be a teacher. Teachers are going through constraints in this country. I am however happy because the Leadership of the 'New Direction' is giving hope to teachers by encouraging and recognising their position in this country. It came a time in this country when you asked pupils for professions they would want to practice in future, they never mentioned teaching. This is because of the appalling conditions of teachers. This is sad, but I am happy because this document has given us hope. I want to rely on the words of the President. I know that what he has mentioned for the teachers would be achieved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to also talk about our marine resources. I know that the marine sector has always been giving headache to the bread basket of this country. Whether it is deliberate or not, much has not been done in that light. I am sure what the Leadership has mentioned about our marine resources will be highly considered by the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources, and other line ministries in the marine sector. Marine is very important and we want the marine resources to contribute hugely to the bread basket. We have to utilise our marine resources properly. We do not want to talk about losses this time. People have said in this House that they were going to be very good business men. They also said that they were going to run this country like a business. Everything has been lost with no profit. This time round, I want the Minister to properly take note of what is embedded in this document and work towards making sure that we derive the required benefits from the marine sector.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to once again thank His Excellency the President for this Speech. I want him to keep it up and may God bless him.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her contribution. I want to take the cue from the young Honourable Abdul L. Sesay and to advise that we approach our duty with a sense of promptitude. On that note, I am going to adjourn the House to 12:45 p.m.

[The House was adjourned for lunch at 12:00 noon and resumed at 12:45 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the debate continues. I now give the Floor to Honourable Dr Ibrahim Bun Kamara.

HON. DR IBRAHIM BUN KAMARA: Many thanks to you, Mr Speaker. Let me start by thanking His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for delivering a very comprehensive speech in this House. Indeed, the Speech mirrored a myriad of challenges that our Economy is facing, just like any other developing nation. I must hastily mention, as some of my colleagues who have contributed to this debate that the Speech did not mention or recognise the contributions made by the past government. The contributions made by the past government are the foundation upon which we are supposed to build. I must, however, applaud the President for focusing on the diversification of the Economy. In that regard, the Speech focuses on agriculture, tourism and the marine sectors. As a country endowed with natural resources, I must state here that we should not shy away from talking about our mineral resources and how these minerals could be used to develop this nation. Except we say we have exhausted our mineral deposits, which is impossible.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, economic diversification is not a new paradigm because it has been there since independence. Our economies have been based on primary sectors because of what we have in this country. If we are serious about diversifying our Economy, we need to consider the sectors we have comparative and competitive advantages. This is because we are now in a global village in terms of our competitive advantage and natural resources. In that light, agriculture has been identified by His Excellency the President as one of the important sectors we can tap

from. This country is endowed with lots of fertile lands in the form of inland valleys, swamps, riverine swamps and bolilands. The past Government has done a considerable amount of work in developing these lands to be more productive in agriculture. We can see this in the commercialisation programme that was started by the previous Government. We all know that the agricultural sector in this country is still predominantly small hold agriculture. If we are to commercialise these small holders, mechanisation alone could not be enough to commercialise agriculture. This is because majority of our farmers do not have the required capital to procure farm implements. I must remind this Honourable House that the past government made considerable progress in educating farmers on how to transform their subsistence farming into commercial farming. There was a programme known as 'farming for business,' which I think could form a basis upon which we can further commercialise the agricultural sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will move to the tourism sector, which was also identified as a potential for the diversification of our Economy. Indeed, Sierra Leone has a number of historical sites as mentioned in this Speech. However, we also have a number of traditional practices which for some time have not been developed. I think the tourism sector could do well if we develop some of these traditional practices. I would like to give a practical example in my Constituency. For example, you must have heard about the traditional Ramadan which is usually celebrated using the 'bubu' local dance. It is indeed a traditional practice that was almost like a national event which comes after the official Islamic Ramadan. And this was a practice that was well kept and everybody in Sierra Leone is aware of it. We used to attract people not only from the Constituency, but from the country as a whole. People from the cities usually go to their villages to celebrate this traditional Ramadan event.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will engage the Minister of Tourism on this, so that he do not only talk about historical sites, but our traditional practices. I must also bring to the attention of this House that the past Government made considerable strides in developing some of the traditional sites, especially in relation

to national heroes and heroines of this country. I think the tourism sector could also utilise these traditional sites.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to bring to the attention of the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs that the past Government attempted to develop the grave site of Bai Bureh, who was a Paramount Chief. Bai Bureh was well known by the British colonialists. The effigies of our heroes are all over this country. If you go to the Eastern or the Southern parts of this country, you will find similar statues of great Sierra Leoneans who have sacrificed for the survival of this country. I think those grave sites could be developed into museums that could further attract or develop the tourism sector *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to dwell on the issue of the youth. Youth development is a paramount sector in every nation. If we want our tomorrow to be sustainable, then we need to take the youth along. After the civil war, we saw what I always call S.O. [2] 'an okada [motorbike] revolution.' As we speak, our cities are being inundated by Okada. Everybody will agree with me that these motor bikes provide essential transportation services in places where the motor vehicles cannot easily accessed due to infrastructural challenges. In fact, when I was in Bo, I looked for a taxi service within the city, but I did not get except motorbikes. This is true for most of our cities with the exception of Freetown. In Makeni also, it is very difficult for you to get a motor vehicle service or taxi within the city. Inhabitants in those places hardly get the services of taxis. Again, our means of transportation in the rural areas is mostly by motorbikes. If you want to access remote villages, you have to use a motorbike. The New Direction needs to address this issue. I am sure commercial motorbike riding is here to stay. It is one of the sectors that contributes to the welfare of the youth of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the youth of this nation have abandoned agriculture for motorbikes. As a result, the agriculture sector is left with mostly weak and old section of our population, which are somehow less productive. If we are to diversify the agricultural sector as mentioned in this Speech, then we need to devise strategies that will attract the younger population of this nation to go back to agriculture. I think this is exactly what the past Government was doing when it was

trying to promote a commercialisation programme through small scale agricultural practices [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not complete my contribution if I fail to talk about the House of Parliament. During the orientation we had few weeks ago, a number of challenges facing this Parliament in performance of its functions were enumerated. I am sure my colleagues will agree with me that these challenges need to be addressed for the effectiveness of this House. The challenges mentioned during the orientation are not only limited to the effective and efficient functioning of the various oversight committees and the administration, but also the capacity of the Members of Parliament to perform their representative function to their constituents.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, strengthening the legislature does not only involve strengthening the capacity of Members of Parliament or staff of Parliament, but maintaining the dynamism I am seeing in the current composition of Parliament. Most of us are already falling in love with the way the Speaker is conducting the business of the House. We are also seeing dynamism between the ruling party and the opposition. Therefore, in order not to disenfranchise the people of this country, I think it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we make use of this opportunity because there are models in the world in which the ruling party is not in the majority in Parliament. This is an opportunity we need to explore, so that we enjoy strength as opposed to threat to our democracy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to once again thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. Indeed, I think it will be good if we hastily award this PhD to His Excellency the President because he deserves even five or ten of them. I think we need to do the obvious. We have universities that could award these degrees, so that we rightfully pursue them and refer to them.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I take my seat, I want to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, for recognising the fact that in order to strengthen our democracy, the role of the Judiciary should not be underestimated. He spoke about the challenges facing the Judiciary. He also stated the need for an overhaul of the Judiciary. I want to implore the President to work

towards overhauling our justice system. This is because justice delayed is justice denied. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I would like to state here that I have it on good authority that His Excellency the President places greater premium on earning his PhD degree, rather than honorary degree.

HON. ALICE J. KUMABEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start by thanking the Speaker for giving me this opportunity to participate in this debate. We are here to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for presenting his Address to this House on the 10th May, 2018. In contributing to this debate, I want to concentrate on health, with special focus on teenage pregnancy; and education, with special focus on adult literacy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that teenage pregnancy is on the increase in Sierra Leone. It is not a new phenomenon because it started even before the war. After the war, strides were made by the Late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba of blessed memories. He put in place certain measures geared towards minimising this menace, but those measures were not implemented in the last ten years. I think this is why teenage pregnancy has increased considerably in this country. I will highlight some of the causes of teenage pregnancy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, one of the reasons for teenage pregnancy in this country is the rate of poverty. We all know that Sierra Leone is a very poor country and there are few families that can take care of their children, especially the girls who need special care and attention. Those whose parents are unable to provide for, they go out to look for other options. Sometimes these options are remedied by big men who tend to sympathise with these girls. However, the men usually ask for their pay by having sex with them and the consequence could be pregnancy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next reason for the high rate of teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone is inadequate water supply in this country, especially in cities like Freetown. In most cases, boys and girls usually leave their houses at 2:00 a.m. in search of water. As they go in search of water, they fall in love with each other and impregnate the girls. In my constituency, for instance, there are three big towns. Mattru Jong has many social amenities with a huge population. Again, towns

like Moriba Town and Mobemo are in the mining areas with a floating population. These areas have gone beyond the tradition of fetching water from the water wells or going in search of water. In that regard, as the boys and girls go in search of water, they fall in love with each other and the girls are impregnated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other reason is the distances girls usually cover from their villages to go to their respective schools. In my constituency, for instance, there is a village called Sebabu, which is about four to five miles away. They walk every morning with their peers to go to school and in the afternoon, they return to their village. There is every tendency for them to fall in love with each other and the girls are impregnated. These girls come from poor families.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other problem in this country is the poor justice system. We have very good laws in this country. The past Government enacted very good laws like the Sexual Offences Act of 2002, but we have failed to implement it. Since these laws were not implemented, when they impregnate these girls, they go around the communities freely, while the girls were suffering. Again, the parents of the girls do not have the capability to pursue cases of such nature. In fact, most of the districts do not have resident Magistrate like Bontho District. The Magistrate is residing in Moyamba District and he/she visits our district periodically. Let us say if a rape issue has occurred but the Magistrate is only visiting our district in every two months, maybe by the time he/she comes to the district, the case would have been compromised. Sometimes the boys are forced to marry these girls, which could be against their wish. With these reasons, we want to see that the lapses that had been made by the past Government are addressed. This is the time for me to talk to the ministers of Government to play their role as spelt out in the Presidential Address.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer you to Page 19, Paragraph 77. We want to see the Sexual Offences Act reviewed. Also, we want the law relating to the relationship between teachers and female pupils to be enforced. It is high time punitive measures are taken against perpetrators. In my district, for instance, girls are impregnated by their teachers. When a teacher is harassing a school girl for sex, it is not shameful, but when the family tries to pursue the matter, that will be time it

becomes shameful. Therefore, we want such teachers to be disciplined by the education law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk to the Minister of Water Resources to provide pipe borne water for the bigger towns in Sierra Leone. If you wake up at 2:00 a.m., you will see people in the streets looking for water, especially in the East End Part of Freetown. I want the Minister to address this water crisis in the city. In my constituency, bigger towns that are highly populated should be provided with pipe borne water, so that our children will not be moving up and down the streets, searching for water. It is not even good because by the time they get to schools, they would have become tired and classroom concentration could be very minimal.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want the family planning to be robust in the schools and even in the communities [although this has some challenges of culture, tradition and religion]. It is not appreciated by some people who say S.O [2] 'it is haram' for a girl child to be prevented from becoming pregnant. This has to do with sensitisation of the people, so that they can know the implications of this early pregnancy on the girls, the family, the community and the country as a whole. Some of these girls who are dropouts may end up being successful people in this country. I want to emphasise the point that the more women who are educated in this country, the better the economic state of the country. Similarly, the more our girls drop out of schools because of early pregnancy, the more the Economy of this country is hindered. As a responsible Government, I want to assure our brothers and sisters on the other side that we will protect these girls from becoming pregnant or dropouts.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a very good law in this country which talks about compulsory girl child education. However, this good law has gone down the drains. The New Direction Government is going to reinforce this law. Usually, when other children are in school, others are going up and down the streets, selling cold water. That is very bad. If that law had been enforced, especially in the cities, we would not have been seeing boys and girls selling cold water in the streets.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to share a brief statistics of the rate of teenage pregnancy in my own district. I am doing this to show how teenage

pregnancy has become a serious concern in this country. This needs to be treated with the utmost seriousness it deserves. The number of pregnant girls who were between ten and thirteen years from January to December, 2017, was 268; those between the ages of fourteen and sixteen years were 645; and those between the ages of seventeen and nineteen years were 1, 813. The total number of teenage pregnancy in my district in 2017 was 2,726.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am sharing this statistics with you because I want to do justice to my people. I am here to represent them and I have to say the truth. If every district presents these statistical analyses, you will discover districts whose figures will double ours.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the next issue I want to talk about is education, which is the bedrock of a country's development. If you look at Page 15, Paragraph 62 of the President's Speech, it is very disheartening to see **60%** of illiterate people in this country. I want to believe **35%** of them are women. This is where I blame partly the out-going Government. The Government of late Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabbah put good systems in place. They even implemented the Adult Literacy Programme; but the moment the SLPP left power, all those efforts went down the drains. I want to implore the Ministers of Education to consider this as a very serious condition. We have to work towards revamping those programmes, so that our adults can be able to read and write. The reason why the past Government abandoned the Adult Literacy Programme was because Adult Literacy Programmes go with a lot of activities like agriculture, skills training, micro financing, etc. This is because when an adult is enrolled into adult education, his or her attention is drawn to what he or she will be taking to the family. In the absence of that, they failed to mobilise resources to continue the programme. It was not sustainable; but with the New Direction, we are going to involve the private sector to help revive adult education in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency the President for this wonderful Speech. This is the document that is going to move this country forward in the next forty years by the SLPP Government.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Allan Blu once said: **“Education is the movement from darkness to light.”** Brohamen Bronsman said: **“Investing in health will produce enormous benefits.”** I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for her very instructive contribution to this debate and for drawing attention to the very pathetic situation in her constituency.

HON. ABDUL T. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President for this wonderful speech he presented to us on Thursday, 10th May, 2018. I am going to focus on two sectors; i.e., education and agriculture. If you look at the educational sector in Sierra Leone, you will notice that quality education has been a tough challenge. In fact, the way and manner academic activities have been carried out tells you that there are huge challenges in the education sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to start my contribution with the West African Examination Council [WAEC], which is examination body that conducts all public examination in this country. If we are talking about quality education, WAEC should be highly considered. I am very happy to see the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education in this Well. Dr Tura Senesie was my mentor and lecturer. WAEC is largely responsible for the deteriorating condition of our educational system. Our educational system has gone down the drains and WAEC is one of the responsible factors. I am recommending to the President or the Ministers to pay more attention to WAEC. For instance, teachers are mostly involved in supervising examinations and marking scripts of school going pupils. WAEC is expected to pay those teachers for their services, but it usually takes more than a year to pay those teachers. Is this how we should motivate those teachers? Sometimes it takes more than three years before those teachers are paid. Yes, I was a teacher [*Undertones*]. This is one of the areas I would like the Minister to focus.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, WAEC is paying meagre amount for marking examination scripts, but the moneys are not forthcoming. Those who are invigilating public examinations are being regarded as nonentities. What they have worked for the past two to three years is not forthcoming. This is one of the areas

where our educational system is being compromised. Pupils could easily bribe the examiners because they are not paid on time. This is why we have University students and graduates from Fourah Bay College or Njala University who cannot write a simple application letter *[Applause]*. This is because some of them enter University through the back door. I want the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education to take note of this concern.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to look at agriculture. I hail from Mambolo, which used to be one of the highest rice producing areas. Today, **90%** of our staple food [rice], is being imported from other countries. We depend on imported rice, but successive governments have not been able to pay much attention to agriculture. The past governments paid little or no attention to the agricultural sector. This is why I am appealing to the Minister of Agriculture to pay keen attention to agriculture this time round. We have the subsistence farming or agro-industry in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [PRSP] and Agenda for Prosperity,' but where are they leading us to? They are the same and we cannot meet the market supply. In fact, we cannot conform to the external markets and this was why in 2010, goods from Sierra Leone were rejected in the EU Market. Sierra Leone was rejected because we lacked compliance. I want to recommend to the Minister to ensure that value addition is given to our products *[Applause]*. This will enable us to meet the market and even generate revenue for the Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this House that we used to export agricultural produce from this country. We used to survive from our agricultural produce. For example, this is a mango season, but after few weeks from now, you will find no mangoes again. This is because there is no value added to these products. The Minister has taken a laudable venture in the agricultural sector. I am recommending to the Ministry to establish a Photo-sanity Department in the agricultural sector, so that it will be able to comply and train farmers or producers. If this is done, it will help this country to meet the compliance criteria set by the EU Market or the International Market. Again, I want the Minister to establish a National Agriculture and Agro-Industrial Bank. A National Agriculture and Agro-Industrial Bank for such products will help this country a lot.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am very pleased with this Speech. It is a very good Speech and that is why we in the National Grand Coalition [NGC] are in support of it. However, these recommendations should be taken into consideration, so that we will be able to forge ahead as a Nation.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to Honourable Komba Kamanda of Constituency 024.

HON. KOMBA M. KAMANDA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my contribution this afternoon will be very brief. I want to start by thanking His Excellency the President for declaring 'free education in this country.' I have a question for the Ministers of Education and the rest of my contribution will be recommendations. Mr Minister, the President had declared 'free education' in this country. This means that a lot of resources will be liquidated to support education effective September, 2018. Mr Minister, my first question is that I want to know the functions of the core education staff and the Teaching Service Commission. The Minister has to tell me their functions.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now come to the recommendations to this House or the Minister. Mr Minister, the past Government has been spending a lot of money on education, but the result has not been good as expected [*Applause*]. For example, we had the school feeding programme, which the President has incorporated in his Speech. According to the President, the school feeding programme will continue, which is very good. However, I want to inform the Minister that coordination and monitoring aspects of the school feeding system has been very poor. The government released a lot of money to head teachers or heads of schools, but little has been done in that direction. I think the money went into the wrong hands. In fact, there were no mechanisms put in place to monitor the financial aspect of the school feeding programme. We do not want this to happen again. Over the years, the Government has been working with a lot of partners on education, but development partners have been operating on their own. In Kono District, for example, most of the NGOs never presented their Work Plan and budgets to the District Education Officer [DEO] and the communities where they

were operating. They would claim to have achieved certain things, which is false. The communities where these NGOs are operating, the government would have no knowledge of the cost of the activities they have undertaken. Therefore, I want the Minister to ensure that the NGOs that are supporting education in this country submit their yearly work plans for the Minister's attention. They can even submit them to the Paramount Chiefs.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that the deployment of NGOs should not be based on regional sentiments. We have noticed that NGOs are present in some parts of the country, such as Freetown. I want to inform this Honourable House that Freetown is not Sierra Leone. If you count the number of NGOs based in Freetown, you will find out that they are more than those in the North, East and South. If we want quality education in this country, we must be boastful of quality teachers and quality reward. I am suggesting that a yearly review of teacher's salary is implemented. If this is done this year and the trend continues, it will serve as motivation. As a Teacher, I want to emphasise that the President's 'free education' proclamation is very good. It will be unfair to enrol our children in private schools while those who cannot afford to pay for their children to attend private schools go to Government schools. We should be proud to send our children to Government schools, so that people will see some seriousness in the 'free education' flagship programme *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President said in his speech that he would offer some scholarships to teachers who have been teaching for the past ten years. Let us assume that somebody has taught for seven years but he/she passed away, what will happen to that teacher. I want to appeal to the Minister to ensure that those who have taught for seven or eight years, but died in active service should be considered. His/Her children should be considered for any benefit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking the Judiciary to support education. I am saying this because something happened in Kono District. We have had a situation wherein an official from the Legal Aid Board connived with perpetrators and the issue was brought to our organisation. I am asking the Minister that issues of such nature should not be compromised. This is because if we compromise such

issue, it will tamper the enrolment, retention and incompleteness in our schools, which the Government is highly against. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I now give the Floor to the Honourable Hariatu Bangura.

HON. HARIATU A. BANGURA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleagues in thanking the President for delivering this Speech to this House. I want to thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for keeping silence over his vigilantes and task force; I would like to thank His Excellency the President for keeping silence over the indiscriminate killing of our people; I would like to thank His Excellency the President for keeping silence over the beating and intimidation of the Mayoress of Freetown. She is a woman of substance and the mother of Freetown; I want to thank the President for taking our freedom; I would like to thank the President for the abysmal blackouts we are experiencing nowadays. Our children can no longer study.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about corruption. Despite all efforts to eradicate corruption in this country, corruption is still flourishing unabated. This is an opportunity for me to tell this Honourable House what the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, met when he came to power in 2007. Before he assumed office in 2007, he met the Anti-Corruption Commission [ACC], which was established in 2000 by the SLPP led Government. There were no procedures and structured protocols that will lend credence to this Commission. However, when Dr Ernest Bai Koroma took over in 2007, he noticed the rate at which corruption was damaging this country. In that regard, he occasioned the review of the ACC Act. In fact, former President Ernest Bai Koroma met a very weak Commission. There were provisions in that Act which could not adequately and effectively criminalise issues of corruption
[Applause].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will agree with me that between 2000 and 2008, people referred to the ACC as 'toothless bull dog.' Civil servants engaged in corruption and nothing happened. Former President Ernest Bai Koroma did something in that direction. Before 2008, the ACC Act did not include any provision on asset declaration and the Commission did not also have independence in its

operations. When Dr Ernest Bai Koroma took over power, he facilitated the amendment of the ACC Act and increased the offences from 9 to 27. A provision was inserted in the Act which compels public officials to declare their asset. Today, I can boastfully state here that there are no sacred cows *[Applause]*. The ACC lacked international and technical assistance, but the SLPP led government has now inherited a very good system.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am just curious, have you followed that glorious example yourself by declaring your own asset?

HON. HARIATU A. BANGURA: I have been doing that, Mr Speaker. Let me thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Baada Bio for referencing Section 119 of the ACC Act, which talks about asset declaration. I must say kudos to former President Ernest Bai Koroma for making it obligatory for public officials to declare their assets. However, I can remember vividly during his campaign and the presidential debate that was organised at the Catco Hotel, he promised the people of this country that he would declare his assets in twenty-one days. Mr Speaker, we have not seen that happened since he took over power.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to tell you our current position as far as asset declaration is concerned. As it is, people declare their asset and there are no mechanisms in place to verify those assets because the ACC lacks adequate staff. It is stated in the Act that the ACC should verify every asset that has been declared by a public official. The Commission is not verifying these assets because of inadequate personnel. I am appealing to this House to pay collective attention to the ACC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to inform this House where Sierra Leone stands in the global rating of corruption *[Applause]*. In 2017, the Transparency International Corruption Index [TICI] rated Sierra Leone 124. This means that we are ahead of more than 50 countries *[Applause]*. Also, the Mo Ibrahim Index reported that Sierra Leone had moved from **32%** to **52%** *[Applause]*. I want to tell this House that if we are serious about the fight against corruption, we have to be sincere and use the limited resources prudently. The SLPP is claiming to have inherited a country that is in a very bad shape. The President has stated in this Speech that he would treat corruption as a national threat. I want to

join him in seeing corruption in that angle because it is a national threat. I have not seen leadership by example up to this time. I have seen the vigilantes raiding people at 6:00 a.m. using official vehicles. If you go to the beaches, you will see Government vehicles and even at bars. We are now seeing Government vehicles at the clubs [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are sincere in the fight against corruption and if we want our country to move forward, we must do the things that are correct. I am a Sierra Leonean and I am a citizen of Sierra Leone. I love my country, regardless of the party in governance. I want to recommend to this House that we treat the ACC with seriousness by providing an office space of its own. We should also cater for their staff through capacity building. We have to ensure that we provide specialised trainings and motivate them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was a nominee of the British Trades Union Congress Award. I became one of the hundred unseen popular women who changed the world. If you goggle my name, the information is there. I cannot talk without referring to women. The women of this country are crying, but you do not know whether we are crying at all. We are crying because we want to contribute to the development of this Nation; we are crying to put food on the tables of our husbands and children; we are crying to see that government and politics work the right way; we are crying to see women in workplaces going about their normal businesses without any form of harassment or intimidation; and we are crying because we want to see women going through education genuinely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should bear in mind that women constitute **51%** of this country's population. The President's message in Paragraph 85 of this Speech is loud and clear. He told us that women should 'brace up.' I stand to be corrected, but when you say someone should 'brace up,' it simply means that individual should get ready for another era of subjugation. We are moving from marginalisation to an era of exclusion from governance and leadership. On Page 22, Paragraph 85 mentions five projections; i.e., provision of training and educational opportunities for our women; establish a Women's Development Fund to support female entrepreneurs; promote women in agriculture through direct support to them

for farming and agro-processing activities; improve facilities for fish processing and poultry, and promoting female access to land and other strategic resources; and transform the Gender Directorate into National Commission for Gender Affairs. This shows that there is no precise role for women in governance *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, William Shakespeare once said, **“They are plebeian, who are only seen to serve in production and not in the direction of our resources”** *[Applause]*. The women constitute **51%** of this country’s population. I want the New Direction Government to give women a chance to do what men cannot do; a chance to re-unit this country; and a chance to see how we could get rid of corruption.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at our Correctional Centres, you will find out there are fewer women inmates than men. In fact, we have less corrupt women than men. I am saying this without any statistics. I want you to go to the Correctional Centres and see for yourself. We have seen more men being appointed to serve in ministerial positions than men in the current administration. The question I would like to ask is that when have we elected a female Speaker in this House? We have women who are qualified to serve as a Bank Governor, Head of Treasury, etc.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you may now wish to conclude.

HON. HARIATU A. BANGURA: The former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, brought a lot of women into governance and politics. In the current administration, however, we have more women on this side than the other side. I want to encourage the New Direction Administration to emancipate women from the shackles of poverty, marginalisation and exclusion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a seasoned teacher, a lot has been said on education, but I have some issues I would like to share with you. I was wondering how free this education is going to look like. My people in Constituency 116 are patiently waiting for this gesture. I awarded 135 scholarships to pupils in the last academic year. They have started asking me for this academic year whether I am going to do same. Well, I have told them that I have not known what the package would look like. We need to know what is contained in the package. But whilst we are waiting to see the package, I need to ask some questions because we know

what 'free' means. I know what is meant by gift; and if a man gives me money, I would want to know why he has given me the money. I have different perception about 'free.' I would like to know whether this 'free education' will help the parents and the pupils. Is 'free education' going to help our children to compete internationally?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with all due respect to the us the teachers, I would also like to know whether this 'free education' will help to encourage the teachers to work harder. Some of us know what obtains in the schools, but I am not going into the nitty-gritty. In as much as 'free education' is an equaliser in allowing the rich and the poor to get education, I would also want to know how this 'free education' is going to help our people and the children. We are going to use taxpayers money and I cannot imagine how the poor are going to pay for children from rich families. If this happens, it will be a complete opposite of the expectations of the people. The 6-3-3-4 is historic and we used to have GCE O' Level. It was believed that after O' Level exams, if a person is unable to obtain university requirement, that individual will be out of the school system. Therefore, the 6-3-3-4 was introduced. The 6-3-3-4 system of education meant six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, which is a transit point where pupils who passed the Basic Education Certificate Examination [BECE] are made to enter Senior Secondary School and those who failed to pass the BECE are encouraged to enter vocational training schools. We would like to know some of these issues because I have not seen the structures my colleagues on the other side were talking about. My colleague on the other side said he had two schools in his constituency. I wonder how the three years for the vocational and the other three years for the rest of the elitist type of education are going to look like.

With those few words, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for a wide-ranging contribution to this debate. For the records, let it be noted that as far as the speakership of this House is concerned, I want to inform this House that to the best of my recollection, this Honourable House has once had the privilege of having a woman serving as

Deputy Speaker in the person of the late Honourable Elizabeth Alpha Lavalie. But on another note, I want to commend her for drawing the attention to the International Index on Corruption. That is a very serious and the statistics she quoted obviously convey a very serious indictment on the country as a whole. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Oversight Committees that will be dealing with such issue that they would have a duty to the Nation to ensure that they carry out a proper verification of declared assets by those who are by law required to declare their assets. We proceed with the debate and we still have some time left. I would like to give the Floor to the Honourable Hafiju Maada Kanja.

HON. [RTD CAPT.] HAFIJU M. KANJA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to first of all give compliments to His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will start my contribution with Paragraph 130 of Page 34, where the President talks about poor condition of service leading to corruption at every level in the security sector. Of course, he mentions the ten different security sectors, but I am going to limit my contribution on the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces [RSLAF]. Today, RSLAF is one of the most trained, qualified, competent and experienced armed forces in Africa [*Applause*], but the less equipped armed forces in the world. Additionally and most importantly, the RSLAF is not well catered for in the past ten years. It was highly politicised and I want to note here that politics in the RSLAF started in 2008 when the Eastern Brigade was forcefully and politically removed from Kenema to Murray Town. We are left with the South/Eastern Brigade, covering both regions, but there is a Brigade in Makeni.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we all know that the RSLAF consist of the Maritime Wing, Air Wing, Infantry and the Joint Medical Unit [JMU], Joint Provost Unit [JPU], Joint Communication Unit [JCU], Logistics Unit [LU] which consists of Supply Service Squadron at Murray Town; Petrol Oil and Lubricant Service [POLLS], Transport Unit [TU], and the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Unit [EMEU] at Juba. Apart from the Joint Medical Units [JMU], the rest were highly politicised. In other words, apart from the JMU, you would command those units only if you were Kamara, Koroma, Conteh, Turay, Bangura Sesay [*Applause*]. I am happy that His

Excellency the President has decided to pay attention to the Security Agencies and upgrade them to international standards.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind this House that the APC led Government took the RSLAF to support peace keeping operations. They took the Sierra Leone Reconnaissance Unit [SRC] to the peace support operation in Sudan and aided them to disgrace Sierra Leone. When the SRC 1, 2 and 3 went to Sudan, they were supposed to be either dry troops or wet troops. If you are within the 'wet troop,' it means you have all the equipment to go to the United Nation [UN] on peace support operation and the UN will pay your government for all the materials you have in your possession. The then Government presented to the UN that they were 'wet troops.' When they went to South Sudan, they were disgracefully returned to Sierra Leone for cooking with charcoal instead of using electric cookers. Again, the SRC 5 that was supposed to go to Sudan did not go because the flight that brought the SRC 4, which was supposed to take SRC 5 to Sudan in 2012, did not do that at all. I want to inform this House that we were disgraced for cooking with charcoal [*Undertones*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members let me come to supply of ration to the RSLAF. During the era of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba's, ninety [90] cups were supplied to the highest Brigadier and even the least soldier as operational ration, with **Le 61,000** for a bag of rice, which was paid together with their salaries. At that time, the the cost of a bag of rice was just **Le 41,000**. I was 2nd Lieutenant by then. I used to get 90 cups of rice, 2 gallons of palm oil, 2 gallons of vegetable cooking oil and **Le 250,000** to buy condiments like tomato, onion, pepper, groundnuts, etc. When former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma's led APC Government came to power, they promised to supply a bag of rice to serving personnel of RSLAF. They removed the **Le 250,000** which was paid as Ration Cash Allowance [RCA] from 2nd Lieutenant. The Brigadiers were getting more than **Le 2mln** for Ration Cash Allowance, but those allowances were also removed, but maintained the 90 cups of rice previously supplied by late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba. They cheated the RSLAF by removing the condiments and previous Ration Cash Allowance, and added 90 cups of rice previously supplied to the Army.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, Point of order.

THE SPEAKER: What is the Point of Order, Honourable Member?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I rise on S.O 33[b]. The Honourable Member is talking about security issues. I want the Honourable Member to be very careful when discussing security matters in public.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, considering the military background of the Honourable Member, I am sure he is fully conversant with the rules and regulations that govern that particular institution *[Applause]*.

HON. [RTD CAPT] HAFIJU M. KANJA: Mr Speaker, I am Honourable Captain Rtd Hafiju Maada Kanja and I was not commissioned by mistake. I was commissioned by Chief Samuel Hinga Norman *[Applause]*. This means I am au fait with the rules and regulations of the Security agencies.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, let us be guided by Section 35[v].

HON. [RTD CAPT] HAFIJU M. KANJA: Mr Speaker, when we come to recruitment before 2007, we used to recruit civilians into the RSLAF by districts and regions. For the past ten years, you can prove me wrong or right that South-Easterners were moving to Makeni for them to be recruited into the RSLAF. They even change their surnames for them to be recruited. If you are not a Northerner, you would not be recruited into the Army.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when it comes to promotion, the President Earnest Bai Koroma led Government introduced what is called the 'ESCAST.' Few northerners were promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. They passed a Bill that if you fail to go through ESCAST, you would not be promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. As I speak, we have more than thirty-eight disadvantaged Majors who have spent more than eight years without promotion because they have not gone through the ESCAST.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have also experienced political dismissal. During the period when the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba was restructuring the RSLAF, he left everything in the hands of IMATT to restructure the Army. And during the restructuring process, they brought what came to be known as British Short

Term Training [BSTT]. Some people went through that training. I went through the Military Reintegration Plan Training [MRPT]. It was after those trainings that the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba brought Ex-Revolutionary United Front [RUF] Ex-Civilian Defence Force [CDF] and the Sierra Leone Army [SLA]. After the restructuring process, the British thought it fit to downsize the Army because of indiscipline and unruliness.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have taken note of many interruptions during your contribution, but you should try to conclude.

HON. [RTD CAPT] KANJA M. HAFIJU: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to talk about Health, with special reference to the post Ebola era. I am glad my President made mention of the post Ebola era. The President states in his Address that he would strengthen the weak infrastructure under post Ebola era. I want to remind this House that the nurses, laboratory technicians and pharmacists who were employed during the 2014 Ebola outbreak were later laid off by the past Government. The past government stated that they did not need volunteer workers in the hospitals. But Mr Speaker, the government made use of these nurses and other health practitioners to fight the Ebola epidemic. Those people were driven out of the hospitals.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform this House that our health situation is still deplorable. The same way our health system looked like before the outbreak of the Ebola Virus, it is the same health system we still have. Well, the President promised to strengthen the laboratory system, so that people will stop going abroad for laboratory examinations. Honourable Mohamed Bangura and others used to do this, but we are going to stop it. Today, the 'Partners in Health' have rehabilitated the Kono Laboratory and Public Health England has rehabilitated the Makeni and Bo government laboratories. However, there are other labs that should be rehabilitated.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when the President spoke about promoting justice and Human Rights, I was very happy because I had been a victim of injustice due to 'orders from above.' I can still perfectly remember in 2012, when I was petitioned to the High Court for not properly resigning from the Army. Mr Speaker,

before the petition was made, I had already resigned from the Army more than a year. In fact, I was in possession of my discharge book. We went to Court and the defendant of the National Electoral Commission [NEC] said they would not respond to the petition because they had prepared the ballot papers and we were on elections eve. The Independent Media Commissioner, Mr Renner Thompson asked us to go to our various constituencies on Election Day. The then NEC Chairperson, Madam Christiana Thorpe, announced that nobody should vote for us even she knew that ballot papers have been printed and distributed in my constituency. Interestingly, I got the ruling on the 25th November, 2013 when Justice Showers said that the plaintiff had no case. Dr Kamanda and another man took Ansu Lansana to Court, but their cases were thrown out of Court. They however asked Dr Christiana Thorpe to announce the second winner. This was the highest injustice I have never seen in my life. The plaintiff had no case against me, but they announced the second contestant as the winner. In other words, the man who got 800 votes occupied my seat in this Well and ate my salary for five years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should support the contents of this Speech. I am one of the Honourable Members to support this document. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has just completed his contribution, which you should take cognisance of. Do you still want to raise your point of Order?

HON. CHERNOH R. M. BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]: If I have your permission, I want to remind the Leader of Government Business that he owes a duty to the new Members of Parliament and the people of this country. If he fails to guide and tutor them, then it is a problem. I want to encourage colleagues who have been in this House before to provide tutorial to our colleagues who are very new. We have to keep our debates within the confines of the Standing Orders, especially when we are discussing sensitive issues.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I do not want us to be laboured the point, but I think the Honourable Member who has just concluded his contribution has drawn my attention to an existing legal precedence which is of great import for this House. That is where I will end my comments.

HON. SIRAJIN M. ROLLINGS-KAMARA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have heard a barrage of panegyrics or eulogies on this Presidential Address. For me, it is a beautiful piece or a beautiful literature. Thus, it behoves the ministers, who have been charged with the responsibility, to translate this literature into action.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, 'truth, they say, is a verbal coinage by which we exchange concept of value.' We seem, to a very large extent, wanting to pay more attention to the gallery. I want us to address issues, so that when we set up our Oversight Committees, we will properly oversee these MDAs and make sure that this literature is translated into action.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer the House to Page 2, Paragraph 5 of the Speech. It reads: **"The recent past efforts in agriculture have not produced the desired results. Despite the large acreage of arable land, Sierra Leone continues to be a net importer of rice. The Budget Statement 2018 estimated rice import at USD108 Mln for the first half of 2017. For 2018, the figure is projected to be at least USD200mln."** Any responsible country that is on the verge of development must grow its food. There is no compromise if the former Government failed in that direction. I will appeal to the New Direction to work towards that direction. We are no longer in a war situation; therefore, I would like to see a situation wherein the soldiers in this country could be engaged in agricultural productivity. Before this time, we used to have military men in engineering work. We have thousands of acres of bolilands in this country. For God sake, we have fertile lands in this country, but we are still importing rice. As a 'Rabai,' I have a relationship with a country that is smaller than Sierra Leone; i.e., Israel with **57%** dessert, but they still grow their food and even still export. We can learn from them and ensure that we make use of our bolilands.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to Page 5, Paragraph 18 of the Address. It reads: **"In the New Direction, the strategic objective is to increase revenue, provide jobs and promote the cultural heritage of the Country."** I want to state here that ecotourism and local tourism is the answer. We cannot appeal to foreigners to get attracted to our tourism if we do not believe in

tourism. When we were young boys, they used to take us to the museum and other places. Today, however, until my kids complete their University education, they have never been taken to the museum. I was talking to the Deputy Minister of Tourism and Cultural Affairs of which I was opportune to live and studied with in Bonthe. We slept in the same bed and I told him that Bonthe had the propensity to catapult tourism in this country. I spoke to Honourable Kadie Davies and I told her Banana Island had never been utilised. The Gorri Island in Senegal was a slave depot where over twenty million slaves were stored, awaiting their exportation to the New World. Four million slaves died there. Today, Gorri Island has become a touristic centre. We can do same in Bonthe and Banana Islands. I want to remind this House that culture is simply a way of life.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to touch on tourism in relation to our beaches. In Jamaica, for instance, the World Travel and Tourism Councils states that in six months, Jamaica realised **\$1.3bln** in 2016. In Sierra Leone, we generated the sum of **\$56 Mln** in 2015 and 2016. And if you look at the population of Jamaica, it is 2.8 million people and the land is 10,900 square kilometres. So, it is relatively half of the population of Sierra Leone, but they generate lots of revenue from tourism. I want to charge the ministers to consider harnessing our virgin tourism. Before the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper [PRSP] programme, we used to have 'Gara' and 'Batik Industry' in Makeni and other places. Today, it is very difficult to see people dress in traditional Sierra Leonean attire. This is very serious and if we are talking about the Local Content Policy, we must go back to what the former Prime Minister, Sir Milton Margai used to wear. The 'country clothe,' as is commonly called, is a harmony of Western and Sierra Leonean culture. I was privileged to attend a Krio festival where I saw different styles of prints. Maybe the Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs should be organising cultural festivals for various cultures to showcase what we have. Therefore, let us have something we can go and watch. We can come together as a nation and agree on what should be our national dress code.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me take you to Page 6, Paragraph 24, which talks about Marine Resources. According to this document, **24%** of our mineral

resources contribute to the GDP of this country. When diamonds are rough, they attract certain amount, but when they are cut and polished, you have to multiply that amount by **8%** or **10%**. Recently, we have heard about a Kono man who does not know how a diamond looks like. He found a diamond and took it somewhere, but we later got a report that it was not a diamond. Maybe we have to teach him how a diamond looks like. We can add value to our diamonds because there was a diamond cutting and polishing office at Pultney Street. If a diamond cost **\$1mln**, when it is cut and polished, the price would increase to **\$8mln** or **10mln**. I want us to consider establishing a Diamond Cutting and Polishing Office in this country, instead of taking the rough diamonds out of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have a good number of disabled people in this country. I heard Honourable Alusine Kanneh saying that the disabled people are given hand-outs. I think we have to move away from that belief. I do not want to see disabled in the streets begging. This is absurd in this 21st Century. We have disabled people who are endowed with sitting capacity. They can sit for several hours. We can also make use of their 'capability in their incapability.' We can establish goldsmith shops in various parts of this country and we can buy our wedding rings in those places. Buying rings from Alie Jewelleries is very expensive. Some of them go to Ghana and other countries to buy wedding rings. God has blessed us with natural gold and we have to make use of this opportunity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about sports, which the President talked about on Page 21. In this Well, I do not think whether there is anybody who has more experience in sporting activities than myself. I can say that authoritatively with humility. When I talk about sports, I am talking about 17 and more disciplines. I have interacted with cycling and I have served as Secretary-General of the Sierra Leone Cycling Association; I have served as Secretary to the Volley Ball Club; I have served as General- Manager of a Premier League Club; and I have served in the Western Area Football Association and in the Sierra Leone Football Association. So, I can authoritatively tell you that I have what it takes to help in this situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we talk about sports in Sierra Leone, people are more concerned about football. The Minister of Sports was here yesterday, but he is not here today to listen to the issues we are discussing. I will however keep talking to him about the rancour and fracas in the football family that has been going on in the last five years. We have agreed it was due to political interference. I would like the 'New Direction' to avoid that path as we have already started seeing. The young people want to see a well organised football. They want to see football play and it must play.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have served in Rodney and Isha's teams and a lot of things have happened. We are still in the same position and it is time for the 'New Direction' to bring change. As I speak, we have 79 grade 'c' licence coaches, 70 grade 'b' licence coaches, 4 grade 'a' licence coaches, and 1 elite and **80%** of them are sitting at the National Stadium jobless. We want to see a situation wherein the ministries of education and sports bring these coaches into the schools. For example, Dyfan and Lindom Thomas came from school and played for the national team. If they cannot be given subvention which the former President committed to do before he left office, I would want to see a situation where these coaches are given the task to coach our school teams.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to talk about education that the President spoke about on Page 13. Many speakers have spoken about the 'free education' flagship programme. Frankly speaking, I do not want to be pessimistic that it will not succeed. I was optimistic that the 'free health care,' which nobody praises today succeeded because a lot of people benefited. I want to inform my colleagues on the other side that they had trust in us and even supported the free health care to succeed. In the same token, we would also give them that trust in terms of supporting their 'free education' flagship programme to succeed. I have coined the acronym 'SAFE,' which means Sustainable and Achievable Free Education. We have several countries in West Africa like Senegal, Gambia, and Ghana that have implemented free education. Maybe the team the President has put together could study the Ghana free education system. The Ghana free education model provides uniforms, school fees, books and meals. What we do not want to see is a situation

wherein parents are coerced to pay school fees. We do not want our people to be forced to pay development fees, which is usually three times more than the normal school fees. I want to commend the Catholic Church for abolishing primary school graduations last week. This has been disturbing our people. We have graduation at the kindergarten and primary school levels. If the catholic mission has taken the lead to correct this menace, I will expect the New Direction to do better.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly discuss about persons with disabilities on Page 22. I want to state here disability is not inability. I have worked with Democracy Sierra Leone as the first coordinator of the National Democratic Institute. The birth of that organisation is as a result of a resounding speech in India by Sahr Kotoh Quee, who is a disabled person. We formed Democracy Salone after his speech. Democracy Salone played a pivotal role in the 2007 general elections. As I speak, the present Cabinet of Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio has no person with disability. This is a concern to the President because I worked with the disabled and I know them. Their quarterly allocation from government is **Le15mln** and they spend **Le10mln** per month. We want to see the Disability Commission functions properly. The Commission was established by former President Ernest Bai Koroma. He did a lot of work, but there has been a lot of bickering of late.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make a comparison between Executive Powers and Presidential Orders. These are two sides of a coin. If we give orders for people to clean once per month, I think we are indirectly telling them to accumulate their filths. What I would want to propose is that I want an introduction of a daily cleaning scheme. We should not encourage people to gather dirt for almost a month and clear it at the end of a month. As an Adventist, I think it has been very offensive to keep me in the house instead of allowing me to go to church and worship my God. This is unfair and we have to do something about it. If this continues, you are indirectly telling me that I should not go church for about 12 Saturdays in a year. My belief is that I would rather obey God than man.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to ask the President to give consideration to this issue. We have to abolish the Saturday cleaning exercise

and inculcate in our people the aspect of daily cleaning. People should not even wait till the end of the month. We should stop people from throwing filth on the streets.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to report to this House that the sitting accommodation at the back of this House is not comfortable, especially for taller people like us. I am struggling to make my speech.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I thank you for your contribution. I have taken note of the excess time you have utilised for the next debate. There has always been a problem with those who should conclude the day's debate. They suffer more than those who usually open the debate. I now reduce time from ten minutes to five minutes.

HON. ABU KEMOKAI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I think I have to work within the time given to me by the Speaker since he is the Head of the House. I am going to cut down the number of points I have scribbled on my paper.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to start with the Fisheries and Marine Sectors. Gbondapi is one of the biggest fishing communities in Sierra Leone. Therefore, the marine sector is very important in that part of the country. I want to thank the President for delivering this wonderful Address on Thursday, 10th May, 2018. After I have read the Speech, I realised that the Marine Sector contributes immensely to the revenue of this country. This is because about **\$100Mln** is generated as revenue from the Marine Sector annually. This Sector provides employment opportunities to 200,000 people directly and over 600,000 people indirectly. This means that this Sector is very important for the development of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am wondering why the past government did not pay attention to this Marine Sector. They could have provided employment opportunities for thousands of Sierra Leoneans, but I realised that it is as a result of mismanagement and neglect. I would like to inform this House that we have been losing over **\$50Mln** out of the **\$100Mln** that would have contributed annually to this country's revenue. If that is so, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to pay attention to this Sector because this Sector is

one of the most important sectors that contribute to the revenue base of this country.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to focus on the fishing areas that are on the coastline. I come from a constituency that has fresh water. This implies that fresh water is also an important source of food. Globally, fresh water remains as one of the most important resources that produce one-quarter of the world's fish from only a fraction of world water resources. Even though human population has placed considerable interest on fresh water resources, the management of these resources has been responding to a wide range of human demands. There are instances where human interventions in fresh water resources have induced or at least contributed to social disorder and conflicts. The President is more focused concomitant action of the marine sector and the environment. This is because you cannot talk about the Marine Sector without talking about how to conserve the environment. We are coming from a fishing community and we have particular trees called the mangrove trees. The fishes lay their eggs under these trees. Over the years, we have realised that the artisanal fishermen and women who are living in these fishing communities are not educated on environmental hazards. This is probably the reason for low income. I want to remind this House that the major economic activity of our people living in those communities is predominantly fishing.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we need to increase the knowledge of our fishermen and women to understand how the Marine Sector works. We must take action now if we want the revenue generation base from this Sector to increase. I want to emphasise that we have been paying little or no attention to this Sector in terms of educating our artisanal fishermen and women living in those communities. The mangrove trees are being cut down as a result of inadequate education. In fact, they have been using the mangrove trees as a source of fuel to smoke their fish. I want the Minister to provide education on environmental problems. Our people need to be educated, so that we raise more revenue that could add to our Economy.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I need more time, so that I can share the information my people asked me to deliver on their behalf. However, I have to work within the rules. I am here to ensure that the problems of my people are articulated. I want to however draw the attention of this House and the Minister of Fisheries and Marine Resources to ensure that our people who are living in those fishing communities are properly trained. We have heard about fire accidents over the years as a result of poor education. There is something we called 'Open Banda' and 'Improved Banda System' of fish smoking. Over the years, the local artisanal fishermen and women have been paying more attention to the 'Open Banda System' of fish smoking. This has been posing health ramification on our people living in those communities. Moving our people from the traditional system to that of the improved system is our concern as a government. I want the ministers of this Ministry to work towards the realisation of an improved system.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank this House for listening to my presentation. I also want to thank His Excellency the President for a well-researched document. This document is a problem solving statement and there is a guidance note to guide us how we can go about completing the problems. With those few words, I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution and his forbearance. I assure him that at the appropriate time, I shall reciprocate. Let me now call on the last speaker for today, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara to make his contribution. I am going to impose the same limitation of time on his contribution, but with the understanding that preference would be given to him in due course.

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to first of all thank His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio for a well presented Speech in the Well. In the next five years, he will become tired and retired. I want to take the House to Paragraph 2 of the President's Speech, which has been elaborately discussed by many people. I want to first of all draw the attention of this House to the underlining principles the President mentioned; i.e., disciplined leadership, integrity, efficiency, professionalism

and delivery. I would like to start with professionalism. I want to thank the President for giving us a Cabinet that is professional. Members of his Cabinet were presented to this House for approval and we approved all of them. As a responsible opposition, I want to thank the President and say it is a professional Cabinet. However, there are few issues or few grey areas we need to note here. Of course, professionalism counts a lot in achieving the President's agenda. We would not want to see a situation where ministers cannot interpret a Bill, but allowed the technical people in those ministries to go ahead.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke of disciplined leadership in Paragraph 2. What is disciplined leadership? To me, disciplined leadership is one that we are expecting to see. He has to make us feel that this was what he meant. We would not want to see a situation wherein a minister assumes responsibility without being approved by this Parliament and has not taken the oath of office, but he/she gives ministerial orders. If this has happened, what then is disciplined leadership? When this happened, nothing was done to stop it, but rather we saw a situation where that ministry was applauded. I want to remind this House that there are implications to each behaviour. If you look at Section 57 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No 6 of 1991, it clearly states that you as a proposed minister that has not taken the oath of office has no business in responding to issues that have to do with the Ministry you have been nominated to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have seen situations where a plethora of Executive Orders came from the President. What happened later? Those Executive Orders were followed by ministerial orders. What did we do to stop ministerial orders? We are expecting ministerial orders, but not after the President has passed his orders. We are not expecting that to happen at all. If the President has said something, there should be no counter statement. But this was a situation where a proposed minister went ahead to make a ministerial orders. To me, this is not a good example of disciplined leadership.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about agriculture, which the President spoke about in Paragraph 7 of the Speech. With your leave, Mr Speaker, I read: "...**The political class and urban middle class must demonstrate**

interest in agriculture. Accordingly, effective 2019, investment in agriculture [including animal husbandry], will be a pre-condition for holding political office.” I hope the Honourable Members on the other side are ready for this. I hope to see its implementation in 2019.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if the President is interested in seeing this policy achieved, here are some recommendations. In the first place, the President should engage the private sector. He should not exclude the banking institutions at all. We have seen situations wherein the banking institutions have been charging high interest rate on loans. Therefore, if the President wants to succeed in this policy, he has to make sure that the banking institutions are brought to the table to discuss these issues. If the interest rate is high, I will not see a situation wherein Members of this House will apply for loans to invest in the Agricultural Sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President spoke about music and performing arts in Paragraph 80. This area interests me the most. After the delivery of this Speech in this House, this particular area was not well recognised until after the inauguration. After the inauguration, we were able to evaluate the music and performing arts. It was good he mentioned what the previous government did in terms of making laws, but we have not seen a situation where the Local Content Policy is respected. We saw a situation where we had an influx of foreign artists into this country, leaving our local artists behind. I think the music and performing arts have a lot of potentials in this country. If we are ready to tap these potentials, we have to put into practice our Local Content Policy and make it more functional.

THE SPEAKER: I am very sorry for the interruption, but I want to address our guests in the galleries. Please distinguished guests, if you are not a press or a media person, refrain from videoing or taking pictures. I noticed from that angle a good number of you have been doing that. If you continue, I will have your phone confiscated.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I was emphasising on the importance of music and performing arts. The music and performing arts has great potentials in making this country great again. Laws have been passed by the previous Government; i.e., the piracy law and the Local Content Policy. It is high

time the current Government made use of these laws. We have to make sure that the music and performing arts sector is productive. It will help the youth of this country; and it will change the mind-set of the youth of this country.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution. I am going to reserve some minutes for him in the next debates, but I think he has exhausted his time. I want to take this opportunity to recognise and thank the Honourable Ministers of Government who are here to listen to this debate:

[i] the Ministry of Information and Communications;

[ii] Minister of Political and Public Affairs;

[iii] Minister of Technical and Higher Education;

[iv] Deputy Minister of Primary and Secondary Education;

[v] Minister of Water Resources;

Deputy Minister of Transport and Aviation

[vi] Minister of Tourism and Culture;

[vii] Minister of Energy;

[viii] Minister of Mines and Mineral Resources; and

[ix] Representative [Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development]

I hope they will continue to make their presence felt throughout the course of this debate and to also take the opportunity to respond to the many questions and concerns expressed by Honourable Members.

ADJOURNMENT

[The House rose at 3:20 p.m., and was adjourned to Wednesday, 30th May, 2018 at 10:00 a.m.]