

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

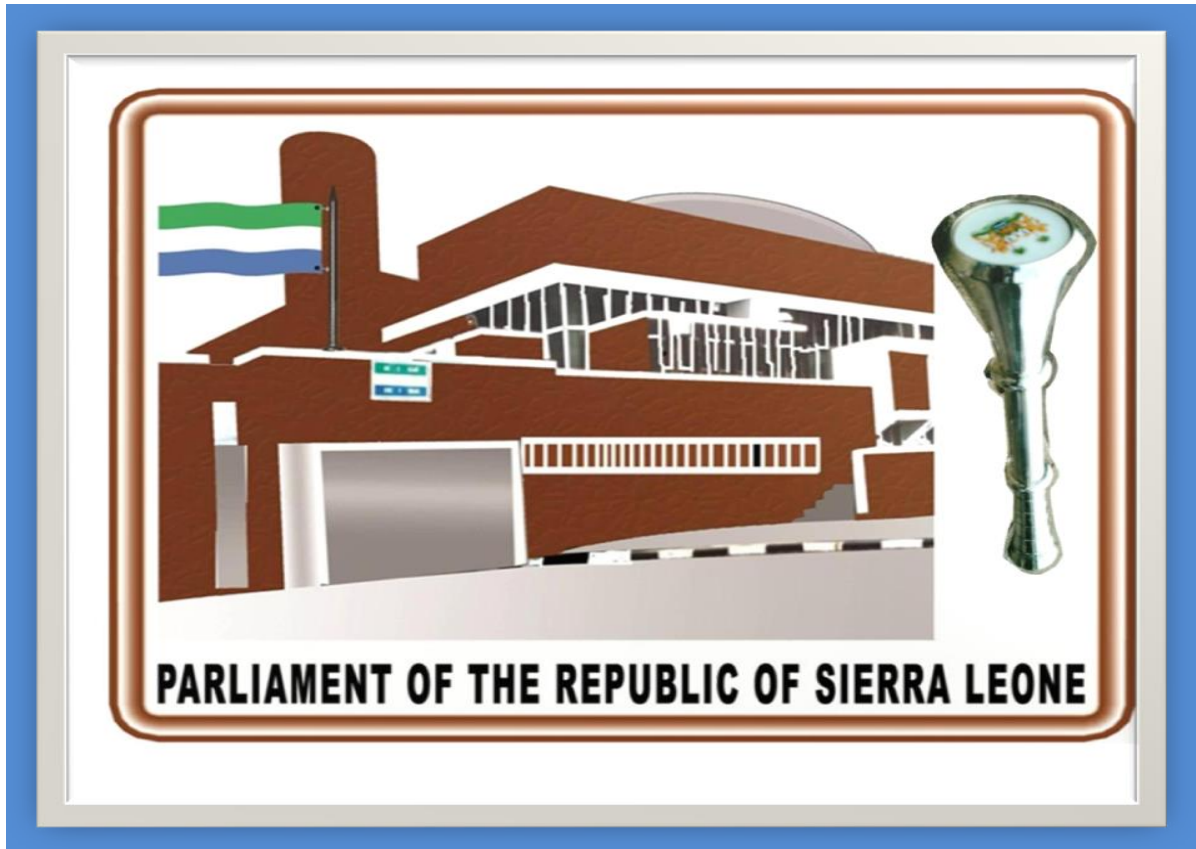
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION - FIRST MEETING

FRIDAY, 9TH NOVEMBER, 2018

SESSION – 2018/2019



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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Second Meeting of the First Session of the Fifth Parliament
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.
Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held on Friday, 9th November, 2018.

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IV. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THE SEVENTEENTH REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE BE ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE AND THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN BE APPROVED.

V. MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

[i] AGREEMENT ON ESTABLISHING THE CONSULTATION MECHANISM BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

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[iv] AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON MUTUAL VISA EXEMPTION FOR HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND SERVICE PASSPORTS.

VI. PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION:

PROPOSER: HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO

SECONDER: HON. QUINTIN S. KONNEH

BE IT RESOLVED:

THAT THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE ANNUL THE AGREEMENT MADE ON THE 11TH FEBRUARY, 2018 BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE REPRESENTED BY THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND NETPAGE [SL] LIMITED REPRESENTED BY JAMAL SHALLOP AND ITS AMENDMENT OF 2ND AUGUST, 2015 AND ITS ADDENDUM FOR THE OF E-PASSPORT TO THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

FRIDAY, 9th NOVEMBER, 2018.

I. PRAYERS

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

[The House met at 12:00 noon in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Thomas, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 7TH NOVEMBER, 2018.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018. Page 1? Page 2?

HON. SAHR CHARLES: There is no number one here. The attendance list starts with number two.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please take note. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6?

HON. DR MARK M. KALOKOH: Page 6, line five. It should be House and not 'h-o-u-d-e'.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, take note. Page 7? Page 8? If there is no other observation or amendment, could somebody move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018 as amended?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: I second the Motion.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018 has been adopted as amended]

III. PAPERS LAID

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [*Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the absence of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation, I beg to lay on the Table the following agreements:

[i] Agreement on Establishing the Consultation Mechanisms between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Corporation of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China;

[ii] United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign ARBITRAL Awards [The New York Convention 1958];

[iii] Agreement between the Federations of Saint Christopher and Nevis and the Republic of Sierra Leone on Exemption of Visa Requirements for Holders of Diplomatic Official and Ordinary Passport; and

[iv] Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Mutual Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports [*Applause*].

THE SPEAKER: I would like the Leader of Government Business and the Leader of the Opposition to approach me.

IV. MOTION OF COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PROPOSER: HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS

SECONDER: HON. HASSAN A. SESAY

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present the Seventeenth Report of the First Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service for your approval:

1. Introduction

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting and scrutinising Presidential

nominees and selecting the most fitted and qualified persons to serve in public offices, met on Wednesday, 7th November, 2018 and interviewed seven Presidential nominees for the following appointments:

- [i] Chairman, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation;
 - [ii] Chairman, National Medical Supplies Agency;
 - [iii] Chairman, Health Service Commission;
 - [iv] Chairman, Information/Commissioner, Right to Access Information Commission;
 - [v] Member, National Medical Supplies Agency;
 - [vi] Chief-Executive, Sierra Leone Small & Medium Enterprises Development Agency;
- and
- [vii] Member, Independent Media Commission [IMC].

2. *Procedure*

The Committee relied on specified documents provided by the nominees and other information obtained from the general public to conduct the hearings. Pertinent questions put to the nominees were related to their educational backgrounds, track records in pertinent work situations, declared assets, tax obligations and the nominees' visions for a successful and nationally productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were closely looked into.

3. *Twentieth Sitting of the Committee on Wednesday, 7th November 2018*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the following nominees were interviewed on oath:

[i] Mrs Gina Banda-Thomas, Chairman, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation

Mrs Gina Evelyn Banda-Thomas is an accredited Media Practitioner who served at the SLBC for over 30 years. In 2000, she became Acting Director-General, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service. She is currently a Media Consultant.

Reacting to the Committee's inquiries, Mrs Gina Banda-Thomas, deposed that she had started work at what is today SLBC as a reporter/producer. In her 30 years in broadcasting, she said, she had risen through the ranks to the position of Acting

Director-General. **"I have worked with different people and organisations in broadcasting like the Commonwealth Broadcasters Association, a major partner in broadcasting and acquired a wealth of professional experience. I will draw on my experience and embark upon the training of staff so as to make a positive impact. It is disgraceful these days to hear Sierra Leonean names being mispronounced. If BBC can do it there is no reason why we should not. The world is now a global village and anything happening is instantly known everywhere and we have to live up to expectations. If the government has seen it fit to make us as a Corporation, we will have to be impartial and independent, and provide a level playing field for all Sierra Leoneans, irrespective of political, ethnic, religious or regional considerations. The institution belongs to the country and not to one person, political party or region,"** she said.

[ii] Mr Murtada Mohamed Sesay, Proposed Chairman, National Medical Supplies Agency

Mr Murtada Mohamed Sesay is a Specialist in Pharmaceutical Supply Chain Management with a wealth of experience in procurement, quality assurance, management and leadership. From 2016 to 2017, he served as Country Director Sierra Leone, USAID/SIAPS Project-Pharmaceutical Sector Strengthening Post-Ebola Epidemic.

Responding to probing inquiries, Mr Murtada Mohamed Sesay opined that every citizen, from time to time, has an opportunity to pay back to his country. **"And as for me, I think this is the opportunity for me to pay back to my country what my country contributed to my professional development. I am a retired Pharmacist with over twenty years work experience in the United Nations agencies. I have had the opportunity to work in many countries in similar situation like ours. I retired five years ago and returned home. I have been contributing to pharmaceutical professional development as president of the Pharmaceutical Society of Sierra Leone. I therefore think that I have the knowledge, experience, expertise, initiative and drive to help the National Medical Supply Agency attain the goals for which it was established because I know exactly what the issues are,"** he said.

Reacting to further questions, Mr Mohamed Sesay said, **“Since my return, I have not been involved in any private business. I am helping my country’s professional development through the Pharmaceutical Society of Sierra Leone. It is a voluntary service I am offering to my colleagues. I have absolutely no commercial interests,”** he said.

[iii] Dr Arthur C. Williams, Chairman, Health Service Commission

Dr Arthur Clement Williams is Medical Practitioner and a household name in Sierra Leone. He is currently serving as pathologist consultant. Dr Williams has served on the Health Service Commission for the past three Years.

Answering to the Committee’s inquiries, Dr Arthur Williams highlighted his functions as follows; **“if I obtain the blessings of approval from this Honourable House, I will be expected to interview medical professionals who would like to enter into the government’s service in the Ministry of Health. Other activities include the determination of fees and helping the Ministry of Health with their programmes,”** he said.

[iv] Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, Proposed Chairman, Information Commissioner, Right to Access Information Commission

Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw is an accredited media practitioner who is currently serving as a Senior Lecturer, Media and Politics and Mass Communication Management, Northumbria University, Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK.

Reacting to probing inquiries, Mr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw opined that the Commission to which he has been nominated to serve was really meant to address a lot of issues relating to development, service delivery, health, poverty, freedom of expression and access to information for journalists. **“After moving from journalism to academia, I have done a lot of research and published many articles in that area. I will bring my knowledge and wealth of experience to the success of the Commission. My plan is to make this Commission a very relevant institution because at the moment, not many people are aware of it. One of my first priorities would be to actually popularise the**

commission and make it well known to members of the public,” he said. He promised to review the Commission’s Act to make it reflect best practices.

[v] Mr Henry H. Kuyembah, Proposed Member, National Medical Supplies Agency

Mr Henry H. Kuyembah is a procurement specialist and consultant with sound working knowledge of contract management, distribution system, stores management and stock control systems. **“I have an extensive experience in managing medical supplies. I have been engaged in that for over half of my professional life, starting with the Ministry of Health and HIV/AIDS. I know the issues with affordability of pharmaceutical supplies in health facilities; and I know the challenges. I am prepared to confront the challenges and to make my own contributions, so that the medical supplies are available where they are needed, at the time they are needed, and the quality needed,”** he said.

[vi] Mr Sharka Samuel Sannoh, Proposed Chief-Executive, Sierra Leone Small & Medium Enterprises Development Agency

Mr Sharka Samuel Sannoh is a procurement specialist with knowledge and skills in local and international competitive bidding process. He is currently serving as Logistic and Procurement Manager Electricity Generation and Transmission Company Electricity, Battery Street, King Tom Power Station.

Responding to Members concerns, Mr Sharka Samuel Sannoh opined that **“Small & Medium Enterprises are generally faced with serious challenges. Prominent among the challenges is the lack of managerial experience and capacity in terms of training. If approved by this Honourable House, my first task will be directed towards ensuring that the capacity of owners of Small & Medium Enterprises are enhanced to enable them do their business plans properly to attract potential investors. Beyond training, I would also look at the aspect of providing funds for the Small & Medium Enterprises. People do not have access to capital. Some do not even know about business opportunities. So, I would want to engage in extensive sensitization in terms of how people get access to funds, and how they**

can get information about the market. Some people have the saleable items but they do not know where to sell them," he said.

[vii] Mrs Melinda Ayodele Princess Davies, Proposed Member, Independent Media Commission [IMC]

Mrs Melinda Davies is a private legal practitioner and consultant for legislative drafting, governance and policy formulation. From 2014-2018, she was a Commissioner of the Independent Media Commission. Responding to probing questions, Mrs Melinda Davies said: **"I was a member of the IMC from the year 2004 to 2008, during which period, I also served as the Chairman of the Complaints Committee for a year. I have the IMC experience. I view my nomination as a validation of the work I had started in 2004, that I was objective in carrying out my duties and that was why I believe I was recognised by the President and members of his party to afford me another opportunity to serve in that capacity. I am very grateful,"** she said.

4. Recommendation[s]

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee adjudged the following Presidential nominees to be fit and qualified for their proposed appointments and they are recommended to the House for approval:

- [i] Mrs Gina Banda-Thomas, proposed Chairman, Board of Trustees, Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation;
- [ii] Mr Murtada Mohamed Sesay, proposed Chairman, National Medical Agency;
- [iii] Dr Arthur C. Williams, proposed Chairman, Health Service Commission
- [iv] Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, proposed Chairman, Information\Commissioner, Right to Access Information Commission;
- [v] Mr Henry H. Kuyembeh, proposed Member, National Medical Supplies Agency;
- [vi] Mr Sharkha Samuel Sannoh, proposed Chief-Executive, Sierra Leone Small & Medium Enterprises Development Agency; and
- [vii] Mrs Melinda Ayodele Princess Davies, proposed Member, Independent Media Commission.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Seventeenth Report is the unanimous view of the Committee. I therefore move that the Seventeenth Report of the First Session of

the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved. The Report was signed and presented by Hon. Sidie Mohamed Tunis, Chairman

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, any seconder?

HON. HASSAH A. SESAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having heard the Report read by the Chairman of the Committee on Appointments and the profile of the individuals that we have in front of us, I think we have no question because we screened them at the Committee level. We believed that these people have what it takes to be appointed to the respective offices they have been nominated to serve.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not want to single out any individual, but I will talk about the lady here, Mrs Banda Thomas, the female Lawyer, who had already served in the IMC and Dr Seaga Shaw, who has a very good reputation in journalism and in academia. I must say Mr Kuyembah and Mr Williams are professionals. I do not think we need to belabour on anything relating to their appointments. They have been screened and the Report is been read to us. I think we are all satisfied. Therefore, I ask my colleagues to hastily approve these people, so that they can go to work.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to however state here that politics is over and we have to focus on developing Sierra Leone. Mrs Banda Thomas said she would be going to an institution which required everybody, NGC, APC, SLPP and C4C. This means everybody must have equal access to the broadcasting house. I hope you will actualise the pronouncement you made at the Committee level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr Seaga Shaw was a writer and he knows the constraints of journalists and why people need access to information. Therefore, we expect you to live up to the expectations of the people. I therefore ask my colleagues to hastily approve these people. I thank you very much.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have before us fine Sierra Leoneans who were nominated by His Excellency the President for various offices of state. I have no doubt that they are all fit to perform their various assignments if approved.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, please permit me to comment on one or two of the nominees. I start with Mrs Banda Thomas. I hold the view that experience does it all. Mrs Banda Thomas is, if it were in other professional terms, a consultant in the Media world. It was in this Well we unanimously approved the current Director General of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation. During his approval, revered senior citizens like Honourable Ibrahim B. Kargbo did say very wonderful things about that young man. The young man came and we all believed he would do a good job. As we speak, that young man is making this nation proud and my research tells me that he was mentored by Mrs Banda Thomas. If she is approved, imagine you working with somebody you mentored, somebody who has actually started making this nation proud. I believe they will do a good job for this country. In her response, she said: **"It is a disgrace that nowadays even pronunciation of peoples indigenous names in Sierra Leone are not properly being done."** I believe she will serve not only as Board Chairperson, but as mentor for young people coming into journalism. I have no doubt that she has the experience and if approved, we will all be proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to a brother and a classmate, somebody whom I have spent the past twenty to twenty-five years with, Mr Shiaka Sannoh. Mr Shaika Sannoh is a young man whom I have known for the past twenty-five years. He is one of those with huge appetite for continuous learning. For him, it is never enough. In 2010, I had the privilege of sitting in the same class with him in Njala University. He is somebody who is always ready to lend a helping hand, especially those he thinks will want to venture into the academic world, but without the wherewithal. He discovered me being a lawyer, but going to study mathematics at Njala. He was very helpful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was very surprised to learn that after he has got a Master Degree here, left the shores of Sierra Leone to the United Kingdom for another Master degree. I called him and said young man, it is time you call it off, taking into cognisance the cost benefit analysis involved in acquiring academic certificates. Today, he is receiving the benefits for what he went to do. He is a young man who has the capacity, capability and stamina to handle that office. He is

a young man and he has taken his time to carefully educate himself. In Africa, once our parent gives us the first education or we get the first qualification, it now behoves you to go for post-graduate qualifications. For a young man to venture into the academic world and sponsor his post-graduate education in Africa and abroad shows that he is hard working. He took his time to carefully educate himself and I have no doubt in his ability to perform. I am impressed and the President used his lens to pick him up. If you are approved, please use your good qualities and make us proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will quickly move to a lady from whose knowledge I have benefited a lot. As a young man, I found myself at Fourah Bay College where I did not know how to answer legal questions. One day, I saw a paper on the floor as I was going towards Hall Three. When I looked at it, I saw the name Melinda Palmer. The paper contained a question on law and she answered the questions adequately. I used to go through that paper every night because I wanted to learn how to answer legal questions, particularly problem questions. This is a lady I admire so much. In fact, there is another lady called Osheanah George. These are good Sierra Leoneans. They are young Sierra Leoneans who are fit to be in independent institutions. No wonder she has been nominated to go and represent the people of Sierra Leone in the Independent Media Commission. She is one of those lawyers who has practised law for about seventeen good years or more. She is always willing to teach young lawyers whatever they want to know. She can be an author on the ethics of the profession. I can safely say ever since she was called to the Bar, she has not been called to the Disciplinary Committee or been reported to the General Legal Council of our profession. She is a role model in the legal profession and she is somebody who is hard to crack. She says things the way she sees them. If this House approved her nomination, I can assure you that those who think they can flout the media codes of conduct and go scot free will be facing tough situation with her. This is because I am sure she will apply the law as it is in the Act.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will comment on somebody I called a father and elder brother, Dr Arthur Williams. When I came to Freetown as a displaced person, Dr Arthur Williams was one of those people I came across in Freetown. I

think he was the Laboratory Manager and his office was based at the Connaught Hospital. I used to visit that office quite often because my elder brother was also working there. He has passion for work and he is always in his office on time. Whenever my elder brother asks me to deliver something in his office, I usually meet him in his office around 6:30 a.m. You would meet Dr Arthur Williams in that office. For me, I call that discipline, which the President has declared a war against indiscipline. He has started practising before now and I want to say it is characteristic of us to go to work either before working hours or exactly at working hours.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the days the medical conditions were deplorable [even though not good as at now], people were going to Dr Arthur Williams and asked for laboratory test, but they did not have money. This man would turn his laboratory technicians and asked them to take the specimen and provide the test results to the patients. I got to admire him so much because as one of the local musicians says, 'there are certain professionals if you do not put money down, no matter what happens, even if you are dying or they are going to take you to prison, the doctor or lawyer will not represent you. Dr Arthur Williams is one of the few Sierra Leoneans who will render services to citizens with or without money.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not take much of you time this morning. The Deputy Speaker always tells this House that we have approved presidential nominees and we have been showering accolades and praises on them. I have my own definition of the 'New Direction.' It means everybody should do his or her own work in their little corners. If the price of petroleum product is reduced, we will all buy it the same price. If the price of rice goes down, all of us will buy a bag of rice at the same price. I want to crave your indulgence to go there and serve in the interest of public if approved by this House. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to comment on these fine nominees *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Mohamed Bangura.

HON. MOHAMED BANGURA: Mr Speaker, permit me to make my comment on the nominees, specifically Dr Ibrahim S. Shaw and Mrs Banda Thomas of the SLBC. I want to inform Dr Shaw that he is going to head the Right to Access Information

Commission. This is an institution that has faced enormous problems from the initial stage. I was the Minister of Information and Communications. This Commission has faced many problems and it is a very important institution. If approved by this House, I have no doubt in your capacity to perform. As reputable journalist, I know you will use your knowledge to rebrand the image of this Commission.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Right to Access Information Commission is an institution where citizens can solicit certain information. However, many citizens were finding it very difficult to access certain information. Journalists who wanted to access certain information could not. They usually request for certain information, but no reply from the Commission. As the nominee rightly said, he would have to ensure that the Act is reviewed. Honourable Ibrahim B. Kargbo and I are here to support you. Let that draft be robust.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to Mrs Thomas of the SLBC. It is a shame for us to have African Young Voices [AYV] being the number one television station in this country. I am not blaming anybody, but the government [*Undertone*]. If we are to blame a government, it is the Sierra Leones Peoples Party [SLPP] and not the All Peoples Congress [APC] government. It is the SLPP government, Honourable Members. This is very serious and the SLBC is our national broadcaster. We should not allow the SLBC to suffer anymore. If Mrs Thomas is approved by this House, I want her to go to the SLBC and revamp it. She has already got a very good management team. The Director General is very willing to work. I want you to go there and work with everybody, so that the SLBC becomes the most reliable national broadcaster in this country. I want the government to put more money to SLBC. SLBC is the only station that you can have access to even when you are in Krobola or Karena. We do not have any other broadcaster beyond Buedu. The Government should pay more attention to the SLBC.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to inform this House that the SLBC staff are suffering and that is why there are frequent strikes by SLBC staff. Honourable Members, we are talking about serious issue, but some of you are trivialising it. This is about the SLBC, which is our national broadcaster. Please pay

attention to it, so that it becomes the BBC of Sierra Leone. If this House approved your nomination, please go there and work for everybody.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I urge this House to speedily approve the nominees before us. I thank you very much.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As one of the former senior cabinet Ministers, I want to use this opportunity to congratulate Honourable Mohamed Bangura for his presentation. We are going through this process of approving citizens of this country to very important and sometimes very delicate positions with the great hope that they will go and perform the duties they have been nominated for by his Excellency the President. I am seeing us gravitating from a point to a new point where the appointments are becoming more and more inclusive. To us, this is very important. As we speak, I can easily identify nominees representing almost all the regions in Sierra Leone. That is the kind of Government we want to see [*Applause*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will start with Dr Arthur Williams. I will start with him not because he was a member of my conclave, which I headed or because he is a family doctor, but he has always proven to be a dedicated medical doctor in this country. His colleagues respect him and he is always somebody who performs his duties without complaining. I have not come across any Sierra Leonean or a colleague of his who has complained about his behaviour. This means he is a good man. I think it is a good decision taken by the President to nominate such a professional to such a very important position which has to do with the development of the health sector in this country. I want to congratulate him in advance. When this government came to office, I noticed that Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is taking the journalists on board. However, I am not one of them yet. This is why I can see Mrs Gina Banda Thomas, who is very useful and consistent with the programmes of the President. We want him to utilise the journalists in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not going to talk about the methodology employed by the 'Paopa' to appoint people, but I am talking about the individual herself. Mrs Gina Banda Thomas, whose husband is my lawyer, served remarkably well at the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service [SLBS], now the Sierra Leone

Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC]. I have good reasons to say so because I worked with her and I was a part-time broadcaster at the then SLBS. She always listened to advice, when it became necessary for us to attract our young people to be interested in football; we thought we could use the radio, the television to make sure that the young people were brought into the picture of international football. The first thing that happened was, there was this world cup and I met Mrs Banda Thomas. I was not too sure being a woman whether she would be interested in football. I asked her if we could broadcast the world cup and she told me that there was no source of funding for that. There are international rules relating to broadcasting and you must pay a fee to the people who have the facilities. She said what do you do? I told her that I would see the late President, Dr Ahmed Tejan Kabba. I went there and President Kabba asked me to tell them to forge ahead with our plan. So, she did it and the whole country enjoyed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mrs Gina Banda Thomas was also always with her workers. One of our friends, who is not here now, worked with her. Honourable Mustapha Brima was very close to Mrs Gina Banda Thomas because he was a hard worker. She recognised the fact that people must work hard and this is why I respect her. She has become a well-known person in the field of broadcasting. One thing that I will always remember, we went to the residence of the German Ambassador one night on a programme and I saw Mrs Gina Banda Thomas playing music of the 1920s and 1930s for us. I asked her how she came about doing that? She said: **"I keep records and anybody who goes into this job should keep records well."** So, I think we should congratulate you for this nomination.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I go to another Journalist whom I literally brought up, Dr Ibrahim Seaga Shaw, proposed Chairman, Right to Access Information Commission. Like he said during the interview process, he said he was very happy because Honourable Ibrahim B. Kargbo did not say much about him. However, the fact of the matter is that he worked very hard and at one time, he was almost going to be jailed at Pademba Road, but he flew out of the country *[Applause]*. His brother went to jail instead of him; and when I saw him in London, I told him that he would return to Freetown one day. I saw him again in Freetown and

told him, one day you will come back to Sierra Leone on a permanent basis and here you are. For those who are interested in accessing information, I think you are a good choice. I want to use this opportunity to pay tribute and say thanks to President Carter of the United State of America [USA]. It was President Jimmy Carter who said, 'Ibrahim B. Kargbo, come over to Atlanta Georgia and discuss access to information with me.' Shears-Moses and I went there and we started the process of putting together the details for access to information. Today, it is an institution working in this country and I want to use this opportunity to thank Mr Shears-Moses who has never mentioned whenever access to information is discussed, but I want it to be noted and recorded that Shears-Moses and I are the first two Sierra Leoneans who went to Atlanta Georgia to discuss with President Carter and Mrs Carter how we could work out the modalities to setup access to information in Sierra Leone. We know that there are problems and Honourable Mohamed Bangura talked about them. We are around and if you want more information as to how it should be implemented, you can come and we will tell you because it is important that you know.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Independent Media Commission [IMC] is another important institution in this country. I have made this point time and again that some of us were rebelling against the methodology used by the Government to handle Journalists in this country. I have witnessed the imprisonment of journalists sometimes for no good reasons. Government asked us to bring an idea and this is where I will mention Dr Julius Spencer, who was the Minister of Information at the time. I will also mention other colleague like Madam Bernadette Cole. We all agreed to put a concept or an idea that will work towards self-regulation. Mrs Davies has been there before, but she is going back and I want to plead with her to ensure that she encourages her colleagues to continue to work and move towards self-regulation. The IMC was set-up to ensure that we move towards self-regulation. When the Journalists say this is right or wrong, people will reason with them. This is what we want to achieve in this country. This is also part of what we call the governance institutions in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC] is a governance institution and IMC is governance institution. These are institutions that are very pivotal to the development of democracy in Sierra Leone.

Therefore, it has to be independent. The Government should not attempt to interfere with the operations of the IMC, otherwise, the reason for which it was created will be lost.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would love to say more about the other nominees, but these are the ones I want to talk about. I hope when they go out there, they would perform their duties remarkably well. I thank you very much for given me the opportunity and also I want to congratulate the nominees in advance, including those I have not mentioned. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I call on the Leader of Government Business. Sorry, Mr Leader of the NGC, but usually, immediately after the Leader of the Opposition addresses Parliament, the person to speak is the Leader of Government Business. In practice, he concludes the debate.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS [*Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not think I have much to say as Leader of Government Business. I just want to thank my colleagues, especially the two Former Ministers of Information and Communications. Honestly, I am sure they did not do a very good job at the Ministry, otherwise those strikes they referred to would not have been taken place. I am saying this because under this regime, there have been no strikes at the SLBC. All the nominees are highly qualified for their respective positions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Sharkha Samuel Sannoh, proposed Chief-Executive, Sierra Leone Small & Medium Enterprises Development Agency is a highly disciplined and qualified individual. I believe he is going to serve the people of this country very well in his new capacity. I want to call on my colleagues to give them the opportunity to go to their various offices to serve. I also call on them to always come back to Parliament if there are issues. We are here to support you and we will give you all the support you will need in future. Please come back to Parliament at any time because we are here for you. I thank you very much [*Applause*].

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been approved]

THE SPEAKER: I want at this point to particularly congratulate Mrs Davies on her approval and let me let out a little secret. Her mother, Mrs Palmer, was my Lecturer at Fourah Bay College and she lectured me at the time I was doing my post graduate Diploma in Education. She was my best Lecturer. I can see her sitting at the Lower Gallery. I recognise your presence, Mrs Palmer *[Applause]*. Thank you very much for making me this way. I know you are proud of me. Thank you very much and congratulations *[Applause]*. Honourable Gevao, can you please approach me? Clerk proceeds.

V. GOVERNMENT MOTION

THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

DR ALIE S. KABBA *[Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 9th November, 2018:

[i] Agreement on establishing the consultations mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the People's Republic of China;

[ii] United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards commonly known as the New York Convention 1958;

[iii] Agreement between the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis and the Republic of Sierra Leone on exemption of visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic, Official and Ordinary Passports; and

[iv] Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the People's Republic of China on mutual visa exemption for holders of Diplomatic and Service Passports.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the issue of the Agreement establishing the consultations mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and the Foreign Affairs Ministry of the People's Republic of China, it seeks to pursue a common aspiration between Sierra Leone and the People's Republic of China by enhancing mutual understanding and to further develop friendly relations. The Agreement will establish a consultations mechanism to

communicate and coordinate on bilateral relations, regional and International issues and mutual interest. The Agreements would contribute to the realisation of His Excellency the President, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio's vision for inclusive representation and effective participation at the local level of governance. The Agreement will also further deepen interaction between the two foreign Ministries so that through the regular consultations, relevant stakeholders in Government and throughout the private sector in Sierra Leone will tap into China's huge outbound foreign direct investment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the New York Convention, arbitration is a fast growing form of dispute resolution. It is the preferred mode in commercial disputes in Sierra Leone's Arbitration Act of 1960, which needs to be updated. By abiding to the New York Convention and updating our Arbitration Act, Sierra Leone would create the enabling environment for business and attracts international commercial investors confident in the knowledge that dispute arising from their commercial activities would be resolved and giving effect through Arbitration. The main objective of the New York Convention is to facilitate the international recognition and enforcement of Arbitration Agreement and Arbitral Awards. The Convention will provide certainty for foreign investors that their decision to submit dispute to Arbitration rather than national courts would be respected and that these awards would be enforced. Accession to the New York Convention can therefore help to attract foreign investment by removing risks for investors and ratification of Agreement between the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis and the Republic of Sierra Leone on Visa exemptions, let me state that this will clear and deep in our ties and improve travel and tourism in our two countries. It will of course make it easy for the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis to deep in their ties on mutual visa exemptions and also to make sure that the Federation and the Republic of Sierra Leone would continue to provide easy access for their true citizens. It is intended that the parties to the Agreement will establish cooperation mechanisms whereby citizens of Sierra Leone and the Federation would travel easily and exit in and out from both countries. Of course, it is intended that the party establish a cooperation mechanism whereby holders of Diplomatic Official and Ordinary Passports issued by both countries will

make it much easier to exit and transit through the territories of both countries for a period not exceeding ninety days.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the Visa exemption with the People's Republic of China, this particular Visa exemption will continue to deep in the long history of bilateral relations between the two countries and make sure that our Diplomat and Service holder Passports will be able to travel to China with ease and also enable the Chinese side to come to Sierra Leone and continue to deepen our historic ties. China and Sierra Leone will continue to maintain friendly relations and we believe that this particular Agreement will further deep in those relations and above all make the two countries partners in the international system. In a nutshell, this is a description of the instruments in front of this Honourable House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 9th November, 2018.

[i] Agreement on establishing the consultations mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the People's Republic of China;

[ii] United Nations Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards [The New York Convention 1958];

[iii] Agreement between the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis and the Republic of Sierra Leone on exemption of visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic, Official and Ordinary Passport; and

[iv] Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the People's Republic of China on mutual Visa exemption for holders of Diplomatic and Service Passport.

[Question Proposed]

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA [*Leader of the NGC*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the International Cooperation, we see no controversy in any of these Agreements. Therefore, we encourage the speedy ratification of the Agreement. However, I

would like to make two comments. The first one is in relation to the consultations mechanism for cooperation with China. We would want to see that Parliament plays a central role in those consultations. Parliament should be given an explicit role in those consultations. The second point I would like to talk about relate to an issue raised by some of my colleagues as the Honourable Minister was making his presentation. What will happen after people could have done honourable service to the country. Those are people who would have carried Diplomatic Passport for some time. In the consultations with China, we hope that since those individuals' names will be in the database, some of them might be senior citizens and they should be recognised for easy Visa fee payments *[Applause]*. We hope, as we continue the consultation, you will consider not only Members of Parliament, but Ministers and others whose names would have already been in their database.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have stated earlier that there is nothing controversial and of course the United Nations [UN] Convention is good because Arbitration is necessary, especially with independent bodies. It saves a lot from litigation fees and we support it and we will encourage speedy ratification. Thank you *[Applause]*.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have a sense of satisfaction that we are extending this Visa issue. During the campaign, we were dubbed as Chinese *[Applause]*. What we are doing now has vindicated us. This means we were right and you were wrong *[Applause]*. This is because we saw in the Chinese what you are only seeing now *[Applause]*. We saw the importance of the Chinese to our country's development. However, we will always encourage our colleagues, our brothers and sisters to come along, even after we have thought before them. We will encourage them and we know this is a very good move and of course that will also strengthen the ties between Sierra Leone and China. The relationship between the two countries had been cultivated long ago by the APC Government *[Applause]*. Therefore, we will support you and we will support this Agreement.

For the Federation of Nevis, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister for bringing something new. This agreement will enable us to go to China

without Visa restriction. I thank you very much Mr Minister and I encourage you to continue along those lines. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA *[Deputy Leader of the Opposition]*: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have been listening to you and you have made salient points in the House and I believe we have no doubt that Honourable Members on the other side are ready to work with this Government. I am overwhelmed with the type of description you are giving to our Government. Honourable Members, this is the right direction we are going and I keep saying that 'the right Direction is the New Direction.' We have seen what the Minister has done and I want to state here that Government is continuity *[Applause]*. You continue with things that are good. The Minister has served beyond the shores of Sierra Leone and he was once a campaign manager in Chicago. He mobilised Africans/Americans for Barack Obama to come into governance in 2008 and I saw it on Social Media. He is here today to give a presentation on a document that was started by the previous Government and I want to say kudos to the Minister *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Like I said, I believe this is a New Direction and we are going to the Western World for the first time because China is growing very fast. In the New Direction, those with Diplomatic Passports do not need a Visa. In other words, you do not need a visa to go for medical check-up. This is what we should do as Sierra Leoneans and I want to assure you that our similarities are greater than our differences and that is why we have 'One Country, One People. We do things because we want all of us to succeed as a Nation. We are going to work together with the Opposition parties. We are going to work with you, so that we can build Sierra Leone on a different platform. That is why we are taking the issues that are good for Sierra Leone in order to move ahead.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, without much ado, we have the other side of the House and they have agreed to this document. Let us accept this document in the name of Sierra Leone. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

HON. PETER M. MOIGUA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for this opportunity this afternoon. I rise to lend my voice on this very important document. I want to toe the line of the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign

Affairs that this document is not controversial at all. This is very good document for all Sierra Leoneans. I want to thank the Chief Whip from the Opposition Bench. I think the 'New Direction' and the SLPP Government is doing things that are beneficial for us Sierra Leoneans. The exemption is not just for SLPP, like what used to happen. The previous regime constructed party office for just few people. This Agreement is generic and it is for national cohesion.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to applaud all of you for stating the fact that this is not done on a partisan basis, but something that will ensure national cohesion. It is not meant for one political party, but for all Sierra Leoneans. This is not meant to construct canopies for a particular political party, but for the general public and the general good of Sierra Leoneans. We all hold Diplomatic Passports and our spouses and other senior citizens hold Service Passports. So, this is going to benefit all of us. I want to thank you very much and I hope for a speedy ratification of this Agreement. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I represent the people of Mansungbala, Munu-Thalla and Kamba-section. When we have such sensitive document that hinges on national issues, sometimes it is good we keep sensitive political provocations on them. This is because we tend to lose the value of the very document we have if we put politics into them. Let me use this opportunity to thank the Minister for taking this very good step. However, looking at the sensitive nature of China in the global economic development, we also want to see a situation wherein ordinary Sierra Leoneans who are in possession of the ordinary Sierra Leonean Passports who are business people, but equally contribute to the economy of this country enjoy this privilege. In other words, this gesture should not only be limited to us, as holders of Diplomatic Passports and Service Passports. This is because it is a start, but we should also seek to serve the interest of other Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are elected not to represent ourselves here. We are not in possession of Diplomatic Passports and Service Passports because we deserve them, but because we are appointed or elected by our people. So, if we

have such documents in our possession, it is but prudent as a Member of Parliament representing my people who frequently go to China to enjoy this opportunity.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to the Minister for the provisions in this document to be extended to the business people who frequently travel than Diplomats. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I wish to recognise the presence of some visitors amongst us. They are the validation team for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. They are here on a visit and I thought it fit that we should recognise their presence *[Applause]*. Pablo Valveide is the Head of the team and other members are: Christopher Clausson, Majama Ibrahim and the National Coordinator, Mina Harale *[Applause]*. You are welcome.

HON. SHAR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am Honourable Shar Charles, representing Constituency 028, Kono District. The Agreements brought to this House this afternoon are very important and I believe there are no issues of controversy that will lead us to reject them. We have to unanimously accept and ratify them. However, I want to comment specifically on Sierra Leone-China relationship. The Sierra Leone-China relationship has been in existence for a long time, but the problem with Sierra Leone is that whenever people are in power, they tend to do things that suit their comfort. They think at that time it is the best, but when they are out of governance, they start to cry down the things they initiated. With regards the visa exemption for both Sierra Leone and China, it is very important and we applaud the effort of the Minister and the Government for going through such rigorous negotiations to arrive at this conclusion. I must say you deserve a round of applause. However, there were comments made by the Leader of the Opposition some time ago that whenever we enter into these agreements with foreign countries or international partners, we must also be present to provide an opportunity for Sierra Leone as a country to benefit from such an agreement. For instance, this visa exemption will benefit China more than Sierra Leone. This is a concern and Government needs to create more opportunities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is high time we come out with opportunities for Sierra Leoneans to be able to participate in the Global Economy. This is why China's

economy is growing rapidly. Let us have the opportunity for Sierra Leoneans to excel in the areas of business and industrialisation. How many Sierra Leoneans have the opportunity to establish bigger businesses? These are some of the things we need to look at. Sierra Leone is a country where those with the potential to grow in the area of business are not allowed. The business growth is in favour of foreigners and this is a concern. So, my appeal to this Government is that we should give Sierra Leoneans the opportunity to excel in the business field, so that as a nation, we too can benefit as our foreign partners *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to ask this Honourable House to speedily ratify these Agreements being laid on the Table of the House for the benefit of Sierra Leoneans and not for the benefit of only those that are in governance or influential people. Thank you very much.

HON. IBRAHIM B. KARGBO *[Deputy Leader of the Opposition]*: Thank you, Mr Speaker for being consistent with our policy on this side of the House. We want to congratulate the Minister of Foreign Affairs for bringing these important Agreements which are of vital importance to us. This is important for us because it will ensure a central point where in the event of any misunderstanding, you have a place where you can go, discuss and come to a conclusion. But more importantly, we are a member of the Commonwealth countries and it is good for us to befriend others. This is very important not only for tourism, but it is part of us as a Commonwealth country and we are trying to further establish relations with them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Chinese have been our friends for quite a while now and without casting aspersion on anybody or any group of people, we on this side are very happy that the Government recognises the importance of continuity in governance *[Applause]*. When we decided that Sierra Leone should recognise Mainland China as the representatives of the Chinese people at the time, some people thought it was a risk because the Americans and other Western countries thought that Taiwan should represent the Chinese people, but we went to New York bravely as a part and we decided to move a motion that made it possible for Mainland China to become the representative of the Chinese people. Therefore, we should, in cases of this nature, pay tribute to the people who stood at the front

at that time. One of the people was Siaka P. Stevens. He bravely stood up and said that the Chinese Mainland should represent the Chinese people; and today, we are benefiting from such arrangement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will also want to pay tribute to Solomon Pratt, who was the Foreign Minister at that time. He went to New York and made a very important case. Ibrahim Taylor-Kamara also went there and made a very strong case. Today, Sierra Leone and China are friends. However, we are making one more important move; i.e., making it possible for Sierra Leoneans to travel to China and the Chinese will be coming to Sierra Leone without visas. Visa on landing is a very important component in any relations between two countries. Thank you very much Mr Speaker *[Applause]*.

HON. SIDIE M. TUNIS: Mr Speaker, since we are now going for prayer, I will try to be very brief. These are very good Agreements and they will promote friendly ties with China and of course Saint Christopher and Nevis. I want to however call on the attention of my colleague on the other side who spoke about people with ordinary passports to also benefit from it. This Agreement is part of the continuity that we are talking about in governance. It was signed during the APC Government and of course they did not take into consideration the ordinary people. The Agreement was for people with Diplomatic and Service passports. However, this Government under the 'New Direction' is going to work very hard to include the ordinary people who are mostly the traders. They leave Sierra Leone almost on a daily basis to go to China. We are going to ensure that we follow up with this agreement. The then APC Government agreed for people with Diplomatic and Service passports to benefit from this Agreement. This Government will ensure that we include the ordinary people who should be benefiting. Thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to congratulate the Minister of Foreign Affairs for this initiative. We have always said that Government is continuity and I have said over and over again in this House that we will continue with anything good for the people of Sierra Leone. This is just one of them. Even though you limited it to Diplomatic and Service Passport holders, we will go further in future to include people with Ordinary Passports. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

DR ALIE S. KABBA [*Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you all for the valuable comments I have heard today. I want to assure the Chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs that we would work very hard during the consultation process to make sure that Parliament plays the central role in this work and we will continue to engage with Parliament to expand the possibilities for us to have visa exemption agreement with many countries.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, be it resolved that this Honourable House ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 9th November, 2018:

[i] Agreement on establishing the Consultation Mechanism between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the People's Republic of China;

[ii] United Nation Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards [The New York Convention 1958];

[iii] Agreement between the Federation of Saint Christopher and Nevis and the Republic of Sierra Leone on exemption of visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic, Official and Ordinary Passport; and

[iv] Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Government of the People's Republic of China on mutual Visa exemption for holders of Diplomatic and Service Passport.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Government's Motion by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation has been ratified]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we have one more item on the Order Paper, but for purposes of prayer, I am going to stand Parliament down for one hour, so that our brothers will have the opportunity to go and pray and we will reconvene after an hour.

[The House was adjourned at 1:35 p.m. and resumed at 2:52 p.m.]

VI. PRIVATE MEMBER'S MOTION

PROPOSER: HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO

SECONDER: HON. QUINTIN S. KONNEH

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that the Honourable House annul the agreement made on the 11th day of February, 2018 between the Government of Sierra Leone represented by the Minister of Internal Affairs and NETPAGE [SL] Limited represented by Jamal Shallop and its amendment of August, 2nd, 2015 and its addendum for the supply of e-Passports to the Government of Sierra Leone.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. QUINTIN S. KONNEH: I so second, Mr Speaker.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, with your leave, I rise on S.O. 25 [1 &4]. S.O. 25[1] says, "**Unless these Orders otherwise direct, notice shall be given of any Motion or amendment which it is proposed to move with the exception of ...**" S.O. 25[5] states: "**Noticed shall not be dispensed with in the case of a Motion except with the consent of Mr Speaker and the assent of the Majority of the Members present at that time.**"

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition, we cannot defer a Motion by virtue that proper Notice was not giving or enough Notice was not given. I will refer you to S.O. 25[5] in the first place. It says: "**Notice shall not be dispensed within the case of a Motion except with the consent of Mr Speaker and the Assent of the Majority of the Members present at the time.**"

Apart from that, I will refer you to S.O. 25[2]. "**When Notice of a Motion is required, such Notice shall be given in writing, signed by the Member and addressed to the Clerk of Parliament.**" By virtue of the fact that a Motion is signed in writing and addressed to the Clerk of Parliament, it is a Notice in itself. By doing it in writing, signing it and taking it to the office of the Clerk is enough Notice, Honourable Member. I will read it again: "**When Notice of a Motion is required, such Notice shall be given in writing, signed by the Member and addressed**

to the Clerk of Parliament. Such Notice maybe handed by a Member to the Clerk of Parliament, when Parliament is sitting, or may be sent to or left at the office of the Clerk during working hours.” That is the provision in S.O. 25[2]. However, S.O. 25[1] reads: **“Unless these Orders otherwise direct, Notice shall be given of any Motion or Amendment which it is proposed to move with the exception of the following; A Motion in respect of which Notice shall not be dispensed with under Paragraph 5 of this Order or one in respect of which a certificate of urgency signed by His Excellency.”** This dispensation of Notice is referred to in S. O. 25 [5], which says that the Speaker can dispense with that Notice with his/her consent and assent of the majority of Members present. So, we can move on.

Honourable Members, I am saying we cannot expunge a Notice or we cannot refuse to proceed with a Notice of Motion by virtue of the fact that proper Notice has not been given. There is a procedure to be followed. We can proceed as long as I have dispensed with that Notice.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: No, Mr Speaker.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: I have not talked about the Passport issue.

THE SPEAKER: Please hold on.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: No, Mr Speaker. I did not talk about a Passport issue. I am talking about the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: It is alright.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: I am talking about the Order Paper. Mr Speaker, we should not skew the debate.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, can you pay attention, please.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: I will, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Can you hear me in silence?

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: It depends, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The point I want to make is that we cannot expunge a Notice of Motion by virtue of the fact that enough notice has not been given. The procedure

has been established in the Standing Orders of Parliament. However, you can proceed with what you wanted to say.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, may I confirm that what we have on the Order Paper is not a Notice of Motion? It is a Motion. With all due respect, I know that Notice is always served to the Clerk before the item is placed on the Order Paper. The Leader of Government Business and I should be privy to it. I am not privy to the Notice of this Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Can you refer me to the relevant Orders?

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: I am a Member of the Business Committee and we prepare the Order Paper before your approval.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please refer me to the relevant provision.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I was not expecting this debate because there is a Business Committee in this House. I am a Member of that Committee. Mr Speaker, S.O 72 of our Standing Orders states: **“There shall be a Committee to be known as the Business Committee to consist of the Majority Party Leader of the House as Chairman, three other Members on the Majority Party side and two from the Minority Parties to be Nominated by the Committee on Selection as soon as maybe after the beginning of each Session.”** The ‘b’ states: **“It shall be the duty of the Committee subject to S.O No. 15 [Arrangement of Public Business], to determine the Business of each day and the order in which it shall be taken”** *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Subject to S.O. 15 and I want you to read S.O 15.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, I will refer you, but S.O. 15 is not applicable to my debate.

THE SPEAKER: No, read 15.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: It is not applicable for me, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, it is relevant as well.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: It is not relevant for my debate, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: It says subject to S.O 15.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: It is not relevant to my debate.

THE SPEAKER: We want to know the proviso, Honourable Member.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: With all due respect, Mr Speaker, it is not applicable to me.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader, can you please sit down? I think I will allow Honourable Gevao to proceed pursuant to Standing Order 42. I want to be heard in silence.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Mr Speaker, you can proceed.

THE SPEAKER: Standing Order 42 reads: **“Mr Speaker in the House and the Chairman in any Committee shall be responsible for the observance of the rules of Order in the House and Committee respectively, and their decision upon any point of Order shall not be open to appeal and shall not be reviewed by the House except upon a substantive Motion made after the Notice.”**

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: It is on that note I rose, but the absolute decision is yours and it has to be done in consonance with the Standing Orders.

THE SPEAKER: I have just read the Standing Orders.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: S.O 42?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, S.O 42.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: No, S.O 42 is not applicable to what is before us.

THE SPEAKER: Can you please read 42?

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: You have just read it and I was paying attention.

THE SPEAKER: I have given my order, Mr Leader. I want Honourable Gevao to proceed.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I recognise an Agreement dated the 11th day of February which by Standing Orders is now part of the records of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Honourable Hindolo Gevao is about moving his Motion and what I will require of Members of Parliament, particularly the

All People's Congress [APC] is for us to observe some form of decorum, especially when a Member of Parliament is speaking. I will now ask the Opposition Leader and the Leader of Government Business to approach me. Honourable Members, allow Honourable Gevao to proceed

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I recognised an Agreement executed between the Government of the Republic Sierra Leone being the Customer and NETPAGE Sierra Leone Limited being the agent, dated the 11th day of February, 2014. I also recognised the Amendment to the Agreement dated the 11th day of February, been Amended on the 3rd day of August, 2015.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the purpose of my Motion is to have this very Agreement annulled by this House. Mr Speaker, being a Member of Parliament representing Constituency 003 and representing the Sierra Leonean populace as a whole, I hold the view that this Agreement is not serving the best interest of the general populace. Clause 5 of the parent Agreement stipulates that the initial price of e-Passport shall be equivalent to **\$120** and this is too much for a passport which I consider to be a right and not a privilege.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I represent 43,000 people in Sierra Leone and **80%** of that population falls within the income bracket of not being able to earn **Le500,000** from their dates of birth to their death. Asking Sierra Leoneans who cannot earn **Le500, 000** to pay **Le800, 000** for something that can identify him/her as a citizen of a particular state is unfair and unfortunate. Clause 5 was amended thus: **"That by virtue of the change in the rate of exchange after the execution of the Agreement and in order to maintain the unit cost of the e-Passport as Le500, 000 the parties hereby amend Clause 5 of the Agreement to read \$100 instead of \$120 and this is to be reviewed periodically based on the inflation rate in Sierra Leone."**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this particular Clause goes against Section 23 of the Banking Act of 2011, which says: **"The monetary unit of Sierra Leone shall continue to be in Leones and prices for all transactions in Sierra Leone shall be indicated in Leones."** Clause 3 says: **"The Leones shall be prefixed by a sign of Le."** Therefore, to peg the price of a passport in Dollars is against the

Banking Act. We are a nation that has the Leones as our currency. In fact, **\$100** is too much and I am of the view that bulk of the population of this nation cannot afford to buy something that can identify their citizenship. On that note, I have moved a Motion for the Agreement dated the 11th day February, 2014 to be annulled.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. QUINTIN S. KONNEH: Mr Speaker, I second the Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Any counter Motion?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I move to counter the Motion that has just been moved by the Honourable Member from Kailahun District.

THE SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Hassan A. Sesay.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I have already moved a counter Motion that has just been moved by the Honourable Member from Kailahun District and seconded by the Independent Candidate.

THE SPEAKER: Proceed, proceed.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I have moved the Motion already, Mr Speaker. I countered the Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O 45. Mr Speaker, we cannot allow this to happen here. It is not going to happen this time.

THE SPEAKER: This sitting is adjourned to Monday.

[The House stood down at 3:15 p.m. and resumed at 4:15 p.m.]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, can you please occupy your seats? Honourable Members, please take your seats?

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH [*Leader of the Opposition*]: Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker, Mr Speaker. Table Clerk take your Seat please. Mr Speaker.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, observe the rules of this House. You have to observe the rules of this House that is all we are saying here. Just observe the rules of the House. I repeat, you must observe the rules of this House. Please observe the rules of the House [*Applause*]. Mr Speaker, this is a House of law and we should not be seen violating the laws we make. Mr Leader, please take your seat and allow the Speaker to observe the rules of this House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Hassan A, Sesay, what are you saying?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I am saying you should observe the rules of this House period.

THE SPEAKER: Can you sit down, Honourable Member? Mr Leader of the Opposition, please approach the Bench. Honourable Members, please occupy your seats. As long as I continue to preside in Parliament, you will all be happy [*Applause*]. We have spoken lengthily and we have agreed on certain details. I am a Member of Parliament before becoming a Deputy Speaker. I know exactly and I often look at the heartbeat of the people of Sierra Leone. Do not mind me for being passionate about this whole Motion. Please get me the Clerks.

Honourable Members, please occupy your seats. I was in this House during the last Parliament and I know as a matter of fact how topical the issue of this passport was. When it came to a situation where the passport price increased to **\$100**, the public of the Republic of Sierra Leone flatly rejected it and it became a topical issue. The people of Sierra Leone are labouring to pay the sum of **\$100** per passport and that is why I became passionate about the whole thing. I felt happy when Honourable Gevao brought this Motion for this particular Agreement to be annulled. I became so passionate about this particular Motion because as the representatives of the people, it behoves every Member of Parliament to work in the interest of the Republic of Sierra Leone and that is my passion [*Applause*]. If somebody is coming up with a Motion like this, I have no other alternative but to support it. As long as I preside, I cannot be seen subjecting myself to technicalities on issues that affect the lives of

our people. This is why I am in full support *[Applause]*. However, we have met in my office and we have arrived at certain conclusions. We cannot be seen as a House of Parliament paying lip services to the interest of Sierra Leone.

Honourable Members, I have been informed and I believe that we have other Companies that are ready to offer **\$70** per passport *[Applause]*. However, I will leave this to the public to judge. I have arrived at certain conclusions with the Leaders of Parliament and I intend to bend backwards at this stage to allow Honourable Hassan A. Sesay to withdraw his counter Motion, so that at the end of the day we take a date for proper deliberation of this matter. You can withdraw your counter Motion because that was what we agreed on.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker, you do not impose it on me because it is optional.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader of the Opposition, I thought you had informed him.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I withdraw the Motion *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: You should know that this is about Sierra Leone. Do not be angry about it because it is about Sierra Leone. In the circumstance, I am going to allow seven days starting from today before we finalise this issue. And within this period if anybody has a counter Motion, you can do so.

Honourable Members, in the interest of those who are willing to file any other Motion or counter Motion against what Honourable Gevao has already done, I will rely on Standing Orders 25[4] to take seven days starting from today. I am cancelling my earlier ruling to allow seven days to elapse and within these seven days, if you have any counter Motion, you are free to bring it up, otherwise we will proceed. Thank you very much. I know you are all happy and I call on one of the Paramount Chiefs to address us.

HON. P.C. ALIE B. SHERIFF III: Honourable Members, first of all let me start by saying that 'to does is nothing, but to safely does' and what I want to say here is that what happen today is very unfortunate because of the scenario that we saw. In any case, we believe as Paramount Chiefs, one of our duties is to mediate and bring lasting peace to whatever chaotic situation we might encounter. What happened

here in good English is called an oxymoron. Whatever we do here should be in the best interest of the people of this country. We want the people of Sierra Leone to be happy, so that we will be in line with other countries in the sub-region. What happened was unfortunate. In any case, we have amicably resolved it and we came to the conclusion that with the meeting of the two Leaders who met in the Deputy Speaker's Office, I think they deliberated on certain issues and they have agreed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say you are all representatives and one of the things you should bear in mind is to bring peace to your people and not to do otherwise. I want all of us to hold our peace and make sure that what they agreed on is carried out. I have been listening to you and when the Paramount Chief is speaking, nobody should speak [*Applause*]. To be very honest with you, I have been listening to all the debates in this Parliament. You disagreed, but you have finally agreed. That means both parties have Sierra Leone at heart. However, what happened today is unfortunate, but there are certain leadership approaches; vis-à-vis, autocracy, totalitarianism, diplomatic, charismatic, opinion leaders, etc.

Honourable Members, I know all of us are tired and I am not going to take much of your time. I however want to appeal to you, as the Deputy Speaker has already said, that he is going to go along with the ruling given today by the two Leaders, so that peace and harmony will develop among all of us. I believe at the end, we will not only talk in the interest of ourselves, regions or sections, but for Sierra Leone as a whole. This is because we want to see free movement of people in the 'New Direction' Government, so that people are happy.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you and I want to say that we listened to what the Speaker has just said, so that we will know what to do. I thank you all.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Paramount Chief.

HON. DR KANDEH K. YUMKELLA [*Leader of the NGC*]: I stand on S.O 34. As Leader of the NGC, I feel insulted. When Parliament has a crisis and Leaders are called to discuss, we should have been included [*Applause*]. I think this is wrong. I think we are here to rubber stamp or we are not recognised.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second point is that we have said it over and over that when documents are brought to this House, we should be given enough time to review these documents. Third, I am a Member of the Business Committee, but do we decide on the agenda here? I think some things are happening that are not proper. The crisis comes and we solve it quickly. The Leadership should be meeting a little bit more often. Let us look at the agenda. Parliament is about compromises. We have to be careful with what we do. If people continue to disrespect some of us, we have no choice but we will be going on TV and the radio *[Applause]*. We cannot be insulted because people would say 'silence means consent.' At least respect us and let us negotiate. Thank you very much *[Applause]*.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member. I want the Leaders to take note for future reference.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 4:26 p.m. and was adjourned to Monday, 12th November, 2018
at 10:00 a.m.]*