



**OFFICE OF THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT BUILDING
OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL
FREETOWN**

E-mail: sierraleoneparliament@hotmail.com/admin@parliament.gov.sl



29th May 2019

PRESS RELEASE

**THIRD AND FINAL ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONCLUDES DEBATE ON THE
PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS**

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Wednesday 29th May 2019 unanimously approved the Motion of Thanks to President Julius Maada Bio for his Address to Parliament on the occasion of the State Opening of the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Contributing to the debate, the Leader of NGC, Hon. Alhaji Dr. Kandeh Yumkella commended President Bio for the detailed Speech he delivered to Parliament “for four arduous hours”, suggesting that it should be truncated in future to save time and the detailed copy is circulated for the consideration of Members of Parliament. Speaking on the economy, he said “it is still not in good shape due to debt servicing and the payment of salaries and wages that is hugely affecting education and healthcare in the country”. He acclaimed the Government for introducing measures that have resulted in a surge relating to effective revenue mobilization with an addition of Le 1 Trillion. Relating to procurement, he spoke against over-pricing which is undermining the future of the children of Sierra Leone and the need to control Government expenditure. He praised the Government for payment of \$1.5 Billion of debt inherited from the past APC government and for re-engaging the IMF to support development programmes in the country. Speaking on effective monitoring and supervision of the education sector, he called on Government to declare a war on corruption in education evidenced by examination mal-practices and the use of technology to promote same. Relating to electoral reforms, he called on Government to introduce the quota system for women’s representation as in Rwanda. Speaking on energy, agriculture, national cohesion and overseas remittances, he said he could not agree more with President Bio that the necessary spaces be created for the Diasporas to participate in the democratic process through voting outside of the country. He spoke on capacity building for MPs including research, provision of offices, adding that “if Parliament fails in its duties, this country will wreck”. He concluded by calling on Parliament to enact a Transition Law as in Ghana and Kenya.

Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina, the Leader of C4C commended President Bio for the detailed and comprehensive Speech he delivered to Parliament. Speaking on the economy, he said that “President Bio inherited a dismal economy”, but “judging from the efforts he had made the economy would soon yield dividends for the people of Sierra Leone”. He also praised the

Government for the monthly repayment of internal and external debts that run into Billions of Leones. He made reference to the outputs of education citing NPSE, BECE, WASSCE and university graduation, adding that the Government has mobilized \$ 200 Million to boost Agriculture in the country. He also spoke on the need for doing the roads between Kono and Guinea with the aim of making the District an international gateway for business. Relating to Government earnings from mining export, he praised the Government for the passage of the Extractives Revenue Bill into law, and the recent launch of three mining policies including geo-data and artisanal mining policies and the review of the Mines and Minerals Act is at an advance stage. Relating to the fear of career development by civil servants and national cohesion, he charged that “for the past ten years the society has been characterized with divisive and toxic politics, mistrust and corruption”. He recalled that the verdict on the illegal sacking of Alhaji Sam Sumana has cast a slur and a serious dent on the image of the judiciary, adding that in 2017 the Supreme Court of Kenya overturned the elections result and ordered for a re-run. Speaking on indiscipline, he called on the Government to review the White Paper on the constitutional review process for onward consideration by Parliament.

Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi, an independent MP from Kailahun District commended President Bio for the Speech he delivered to Parliament, adding that “Rome was not built in a day”. He praised the Government for the mobilization of resources to boost Agriculture especially with the creation of 25 ABCs. She questioned the students’ loan scheme saying that one could hardly get employed after graduation. Speaking on the revival of Koindu market, she said that most of the produce from Kailahun is taken to Guinea due to bad roads and that “the Yenga situation still remains unresolved”. Acclaiming the Government for the car-wash project for the youth, she recalled that women who were raped in SLPP offices for the past ten years are yet to get justice.

Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas, the Deputy Speaker of Parliament commended President Bio for the solid Speech he delivered to Parliament, adding that those policy statements will be quantified into budgetary terms for implementation. He also said that the austerity measures introduced by the last government gravely impacted the salaries of MPs and civil servants, whilst praising the current Government for effective revenue mobilization. He also said that the people are impressed with the introduction of the Free Quality Education and advised the opposition not to play politics with it. He also said that the FQE will enable the SLPP to score more than 60% of the votes in the 2023 general elections. He said that the Government has removed the burden from him relating to the payment of school fees for more than 500 pupils in his constituency. He charged the APC MPs for being controlled by outside forces during the course of executing their duties in Parliament. He decried Journalists and CSOs who are acting as Civil Society Movement with political motives. Speaking in favour of expunging seditious libel from the law books, which the last government had promised but failed to deliver, he suggested that it should be replaced with civil litigation to protect the reputation of the citizens from defamation and other excesses of the media and society.

The Acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo commended President Bio for the Speech he delivered to Parliament, adding that the APC demands respect because of its large following. He recognized the past APC government for constructing quality roads from

Kenema-Pendembu and Port Loko to Kambia, adding that over-taxation is crippling businesses in the country. He charged Government with the deteriorating state of electricity supply in the country, saying that the APC gave energy to Bo and Kenema. He also called for concerted efforts aimed at working together and the need for the acceptance of truth where mistakes had been made for the development of the country. He said that the former president, Ernest Bai Koroma could not attend the conference on national cohesion because his security had been withdrawn. He decried the decapitation of the forest cover which may come with dire consequences such as acute water shortage in the country. Speaking on the importance of ICT, he denied that APC MPs are being controlled by outside forces.

Concluding the debate, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Sidie M. Tunis commended President Bio for his detailed Address to Parliament in light of the existing situation in the country. He said that in spite of the walk-out, he wanted to thank the Speaker for allowing the APC to participate in the debate. In making some clarifications, he denied the rapid deterioration of the energy sector, citing an upsurge in the customers' base of EDSA from 175,000 to 195,000. He acclaimed President Bio for facilitating Bintumani 1, 2 & 3 for national cohesion and decried the APC for failing to take part in the recently concluded Bintumani 3 conference on national cohesion. He also questioned the role of the Bar Association recalling the statements made by its president regarding the election of the Speaker, and the dismissal of officials with security of tenure, but failed to point to the SLPP women who were raped in 2007, the sacking of the Bank Governor and the unconstitutional sacking of the former vice-president. He said that institutions such as the Bar Association should go far from politics. He referred to a report from the IMF that praised the Government for the effective management of the economy and the extended credit facility, assuring that by the end of the year the challenge with the Dollar would be a thing of the past. He called on the Opposition to cooperate and work with the Government for the development of the country and not to subject themselves to manipulation and control from external forces.

Department of Public Relations
Parliament of Sierra Leone
+23278495023/+23278426851