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**PRESS RELEASE
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DAY THREE: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

On the third allotted day, Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Thursday 19th January 2017, continued its debate on the Presidential Speech delivered by President Koroma in December last year at the opening of the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Speaking to the motion of thanks to HE the President, Deputy Majority Leader of the House, Hon. Leonard Fofanah eulogized President Koroma for the good programmes he has undertaken for the development of Sierra Leone, whilst noting that he deserves much more than what they had said about him. He referred to him as a pacesetter even when he served as Minority Leader of the House. He described his leadership acumen as irreplaceable in both the APC and the SLPP that are in an acrimonious, fierce flag bearer contest. He also said that had it not been for the intervention of ebola, Sierra Leone would have become a paradise under the watch of President Koroma. He commended the president's recovery priorities that are being simultaneously implemented in every chiefdom in the country. These recovery priorities, he said, are centered on agriculture, education, health and fisheries. On education, he espoused the building of new structures to curtail congestion and overcrowding in schools, whilst acclaiming the school feeding programme that has been introduced by Government to encourage and retain the pupils. He also raised concern on the transformation of Eastern Polytechnic to a university in the Eastern Region, saying that studies are ongoing and that they are currently sharing courses with FBC under the leadership of Professor, Dr. Lahai.

Hon. Umar Paran Tarawally decried President Koroma's call to the ring of development, instead of continued criticism of Government on social media without any input in respect of national development. He furthered that they would refuse to go to the ring in the last days of his tenure as they are not boxers. On the distribution of the national cake with regards to infrastructural development, he accused the Government of unevenly allocating 38 kilometers as against 8 kilometers for the construction of roads in Makeni and Bo Cities. He thanked President Koroma a bit for a job well done on infrastructural development. He also said that the de-amalgamation process that will lead to the

creation of a new district in Koinadugu is a deliberate ploy to tactically maneuver and delay the elections process in the country. In this vein, he called on Government to do same for Bandajuma and Panguma which were also part of the colonial districts in Sierra Leone. He called on President Koroma to announce the date for the conduct of the 2018 elections. He furthered that the “Constitution and the people have the power to stop the President from extending his tenure in office”.

Other MPs spoke to the motion as the debate continued.