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PRESS RELEASE

SECOND ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT CONTINUES DEBATE ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 28th May 2019 continued the debate on the Presidential Address delivered to Parliament by President Julius Maada Bio on the occasion of the State Opening of the Second Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

In his contribution to the debate, Hon. Abdul Kargbo of APC said that “equal rights and justice are the precursors to peace and national development”. Speaking on the economy, he accused the Government of spending more than the revenue they had generated over the past one year. He decried the placement of ban on tax waivers, adding it would scare away investors and undermine revenue mobilization. He also charged that the timber export is aiding and abetting the depletion of the environment. Speaking on the promises made by President Bio, he called on “Government to construct more schools than to build houses for Members of Parliament”.

Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara of C4C commended President Bio for the long Speech he delivered to Parliament, adding “it is full of goodies”. Speaking on the Development Fund for women, she called for the equitable distribution of the Le 2 Billion allocated, devoid of partisan considerations. Relating to the establishment of a Gender Commission, she acclaimed the Government for such an initiative, but cautioned that it should be all-inclusive. She also spoke on the need for increasing the budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Social Welfare so as to enable it to effectively implement its programmes and policies geared toward women’s empowerment. She further revealed that “Sierra Leone does not have laws to deal with human trafficking”.

Hon. Bashiru Silikie of SLPP decried “the APC for walking-out of Parliament amidst the National Anthem being played and for failing to take part in the just concluded conference for national cohesion”. He called on civil servants to work assiduously and to deliver on the promises that had been made by President Bio. He assured of Government’s intention to sanitize the education sector, especially examination mal-practices. He praised the Government for approving over 1000 schools in one year and the recruitment of trained and qualified teachers. Preferring human capital development “to construction of cosmetic roads”, he acclaimed the Government for the purchasing of university forms for the first time for students who intend to

enroll to the universities. He also decried the past APC government for the “uneven construction of roads in the country”.

Hon. Foday Mario Kamara of NGC thanked President Bio for delivering “a brilliant Speech to Parliament”, adding that “NGC is not involved in unnecessary criticisms”. Speaking on revenue mobilization and tax exemptions, he called on Government to develop a policy with a blue-print to enhance transparency and accountability relating to tax governance. Relating to effective monitoring and supervision of the timber trade, he questioned the aspect of monopoly in light of timber export which he suggested should be decentralized and that its proceeds should be used to benefit the affected communities. He also charged that “the 50 buses to support the Free Quality Education have taken far too long to arrive in the country”. He also said that the school feeding programme should come from our local rice production to boost Agriculture and put more funds into the pockets of our farmers.

Other MPs spoke to the motion.

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