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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE CONTINUES**

The “Motion of Thanks to President Bio” dedicated to his maiden Speech to the Fifth Parliament has on Thursday 31st May 2018 been debated now for four uninterrupted days, with critical analysis and proffering of recommendations for the success of the “New Direction”.

Hon. Alusine Bash Kamara of APC thanked President Bio for the wonderful Speech he delivered to Parliament, whilst appreciating him for the important appointments he had given to the sons and daughters of Karene District, and wished them success in office. Speaking on low admission, he said the implementation of the 6344 system of education has increased the number of school enrolment; boost the morale of teachers by opening bank accounts and the increment of salaries. He also called on the Ministries of Education to consider teachers without children, but had taught for over ten years, in respect of free tertiary education, whilst speaking on the need for the establishment of a WASSCE center in Gbinti, now in Karene District by legislation.

In his contribution, Hon. Daniel B. Koroma of APC commended President Bio and referred to his Speech as “being opposition focused”, and “failed to acknowledge the good works of APC, citing the economy, agriculture, subsidies, save for the improvement of Lungi International Airport which was described as fairly good, but needs repairs”. He also thanked President Bio for continuing development programmes initiated by the past government, except for the 6344 system of education that is about to be reversed, whilst enumerating the “graduation of internet penetration from 10-70%, and the current challenges in the energy sector should be addressed instead of being blamed on bad policies or agreements”.

Hon. Paramount Chief, Kangbai Joe Macavoray of Bo District commended President Bio for his comprehensive Speech delivered to Parliament, whilst referring to him as “a man of his words”, having known him for a long time. He called on the Ministers of Government to perform because they are 90% responsible for the success of the President’s initiatives, and that 90% of the people are engaged in agricultural activities, with over 300 ABCs that are under-utilized, and also spoke on the need for a timely distribution of agricultural inputs, with the required knowledge. For roads that could be done by Chiefs, he decried the idea of importing contractors, and spoke on the need of supporting them to do those roads. Whilst talking on the implementation of the free education policy, sooner than later, he appealed for the

involvement of Chiefs, the re-awakening of the dormant Teaching Service Commission, and the review of the Education Act of 2004. On the issue relating to the payment of backlogs to Paramount Chiefs, he called on Parliament to prove her mettle in the light of improving its conditions of service.

Hon. Bashiru Silikie of SLPP thanked President Bio and referred to the Speech as “having all the ingredients necessary for the development” of the country, with nothing to criticize. He also prefaced his contribution by thanking the people of Sierra Leone for electing President Bio and the SLPP to governance again. He said “in spite of the advice and recommendations advanced by the SLPP”, he reminded the “APC of campaigning Maada Bio instead of the issues bordering on bread and butter during the past elections”. He continued that “the SLPP left a lot of mobile operators among which only Orange and Africell are now operating”. He decried the past government of “implementing the toll road agreement, the sacking of the former Vice President without recourse to Parliament, the denial of law graduates to practice, and said that they would be in permanent opposition”. Unlike the last Parliament, he boasted that “under the New Direction, Ministers come and witness ensuing debates in the House”.

Hon. Moses A. Edwin of SLPP thanked President Bio and said that his contribution will hinge on “tologbolization and paopaism”, whilst speaking on the need for professionalism, discipline, and delivery of services. Being the “third hungriest country in the world” he likened it to living “around abundance of water, yet you go thirsty”, whilst blaming past governments, “especially APC for poor agricultural outputs”, citing large arable lands for cultivation. He also said that “it is only in a tolongbonise economy, centered on voodoo and kokonomics, after a much trumpeted fastest growing economy, that they could not feed the people, and are also unable to pay teachers and contractors on time”. He also blamed energy outages on bad agreements signed by the past government.

Hon. Musa Fofanah of C4C commended President Bio and promised to speak on the platform of objectivity. He spoke largely on issues affecting the provision of clean and sustainable water supply to the people of this country. He decried SALWACO for not rehabilitating existing water infrastructure across the country, but chose to construct new ones by using fake contractors, including boreholes that are not yielding the desired results. Speaking on water gravity system in all the chiefdoms in Kono District, he continued that “they are in a state of collapse because of no repairs or rehabilitation”. Calling for support, he also said that “if the President fails, Parliament will be held accountable”.

Hon. Paramount Chief, Sahr Youngai Kontanday Mbriwa II of Kono District commended President Bio and praised his free education policy aimed at human development, with a view to curbing ignorance and poverty in the country. Speaking on education as a tool of empowerment and liberation, he called on Government to clear all formal barriers to access learning, and the need to clarify the policy on free education, in respect of the obligations of stakeholders in the country. He also spoke on the need for the review of the Child Rights Act of 2007, with the view to strengthen the laws against perpetrators of teenage pregnancies in the country. He also called on the Government to improve on the provision of energy, water, long

delay in dispensing justice on land cases, boundary disputes, and the construction of major roads linking Kono to neighboring Guinea and other major towns in the country.

Hon. Catherine Zainab Tarawally of APC also thanked President Bio for prioritizing education and agriculture in his Speech to Parliament. Defending the 6344 system of education due to the recommendations of the Prof. Gbamanja Commission of Inquiry, she admitted that enrolment at tertiary level has increased considerably. Describing herself as “a master farmer”, she noted the President’s vision of owning a farm before appointment to public office “as a human rights violation”, whilst calling on him to make agriculture attractive by constructing more feeder roads and to get tractors on hire-purchase.

Hon. Bernadette Wuyatta Songa of SLPP thanked President Bio and the people for solidly voting SLPP to governance and described his Speech as “holistic”. Passionately speaking on dual citizenship, which she had renounced to serve her country, she called on the Government to amend and repeal those discriminatory provisions from our law books with the tendencies of barring our Diaspora brothers and sisters from becoming Presidents, Ministers, and Members of Parliament, noting the crucibles Dr. Kandeh Yumkella had similarly gone through. She recalled that Diaspora protested before No. 10 Downing Street in London when the former Vice President was sacked “unconstitutionally”, and heaped enormous praises on the First Lady, Mrs. Fatima Bio for being a supportive wife and a champion of women’s empowerment in the country.

Hon. Abubakarr Fofanah of SLPP commended President Bio for the Speech he delivered to Parliament, and supported his policy initiative of reversing the 6344 to 6334 system of education “because the former promotes teenage pregnancies and the later reduces or eliminates incidences of such”. In effect, he said the 6334 system caters for the survival and development of the girl child, through education.

Other MPs spoke to the motion.

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