



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2017**

*SESSION – 2016/2017*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

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First Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Fourth Parliament  
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

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## **Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House**

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

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**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

*[The Table Clerk, Mr Anthony C. Kamara, Read the Prayers].*

*[The House met at 10:35 a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown].*

*[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Chernor R. M. Bah, in the Chair].*

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of S. O. 5[2]*

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH** [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave the indulgence of this House to make the following amendments. Under item III [b], the document in question will be laid by the Honourable Paramount Chief Brima Victor Sidi Kebbie. After item IV, there will be an item IV [b]; i.e., the ratification of the document that is going to be laid by the Honourable Minister of Works and Infrastructure, Honourable Alhaji Kemoh Sesay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Majority Leader, I think I would have to entertain that before the tribute because we need enough time for the tribute.

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH:** That is what I am saying sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** But you said IV [b] cannot be IV [b]. It should be item IV and item IV becomes item V.

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH:** Okay Sir. In that regard, item V should be tribute by Honourable Members of Parliament to the memory of our compatriots, who have been called to eternity by God Almighty following the flood and mudslide disaster on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Honourable Members, I am sure we are all in agreement. So, the Order Paper is accordingly amended.

**II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2017**

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017. Page 1? Page 2? Page 3?

**HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH:** Mr Speaker, Page 3. I was marked absent, but I was absent with excuse.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, please take note. Anymore on Page 3? Page 4? Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? There being no other amendment, could someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 as amended?

**HON. MOSES B. JORKIE:** I so move, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. KUSAN SESAY:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 has been adopted as amended]*

### **III. PAPERS LAID**

[A] THE MINISTER OF WORKS, HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**HON. ALHAJI IBRAHIM KEMOH SESAY** *[Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I crave the indulgence of this Honourable House to lay on the Table, the Stakeholders Communiqué on the agreed toll fees for tricycles, vehicles and trailers plying the Wellington/Masiaka highway.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Mr Minister.

[B] HON. PARAMOUNT CHIEF BRIMA VICTOR SIDI KEBBIE

**HON. P.C BRIMA VICTOR SIDI KEBBIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to lay on the Table of the House the following documents:

[i] Report of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Delegation to the 2016 Second Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September to Friday, 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2016;

[ii] Report of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Delegation to the 2017 Extra Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from Friday, 10<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> February, 2017; and

[iii] Report of the Sierra Leone Parliamentary Delegation to the 2017 First Ordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament, held in Abuja, Nigeria, from Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2017.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Paramount Chief.

### **III. GOVERNMENT MOTION**

THE MINISTER OF WORKS HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

**HON. ALHAJI IBRAHIM KEMOH SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that this Honourable House ratify the Stakeholders Communiqué on the agreed toll fees for tricycles, vehicles and trailers plying the Wellington/Masiaka highway.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Honourable House ratified the Wellington-Masiaka highway toll and Government viewed the concerns of citizens, particularly with reference to the prices of the toll gates. Additionally, on the standing relevance of the integrity of Parliament that has approved the Agreement and it is the responsibility of Government to respond to the concerns of citizens, Government thought it fit to review the prices downwards. In the circumstance, I want to inform this House that Government have now reviewed the prices of the toll downwards by three folds [one third] of the initial prices [*Applause*]. In the circumstance, a toll that was supposed to be **Le 12,000** per gate is now **Le 4,000**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Government of Sierra Leone, under the directive of President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, is not unaware of the economic situation in the country. Therefore, he took into good path the agitations of all Sierra Leoneans in terms of our toll gates. Assigned to it by His Excellency the President, the Ministry of Works invited all stakeholders, involving the Sierra Leone Road Authority [SLRA], International Trade Organisation [ITO], the Motor Drivers Union, Ministry of Youth Affairs, truck owners to name a few. All of them took part in two months consultations geared towards reducing the price of toll by three times. So, it is the agreement of all stakeholders, including Parliament that prices are reduced downwards to a point that is practically affordable by Sierra Leoneans.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you will agree with me that before now, there were no official toll gates in the country; therefore, Government recognises the newness of the project and understands the concerns of Sierra Leoneans that they were frowning at paying at the toll gates. But having understood in detailed, not only the need, but the relevance and necessity of toll gates, Sierra Leoneans are now in readiness to pay for tolls.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can ascertain with documentation that **80%** of Sierra Leoneans have now agreed that we can use toll which is a good vogue in the country that we are opening our hearts to the new big hearts of the world. About **80%** Sierra Leoneans agreed that we must not only use the toll road, but pay for the tolls. I also want to inform Parliament that Sierra Leoneans are now happy with the reduction of the prices and they are prepared to pay.

In the circumstance, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Government, particularly the Ministry of Works, is now geared towards starting the toll roads by tomorrow. But before that, it is the law that whenever an institution changes price or taxes consistent with Parliamentary Standing Orders 18[1] and [2], we must come to Parliament to make sure that we ratify and make it legal. In that regard, the Ministry of Works, the SLRA and stakeholders presented themselves to the Parliamentary Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure and did our presentations. In that Committee, which was stage one in rectifying the document, we understood ourselves clearly and we made corrections to the documents which are now being adapted to the new document. With the support of the Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Works was emboldened to bring the document to Parliament to come and rectify it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, any Minister in the right mind dealing with this matter must know that he has to come to Parliament to effect such changes in price. Therefore, I made myself available not only to the Committee, but also to avail myself to the whole House of Parliament because the Committee is the first point of contact by making corrections and addendum to the ratification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, legitimacy number two is coming into the Well of Parliament for the whole country; meaning Parliament to ratify the document you have tampered with, in other words, change legally. Otherwise the cost as beautiful as it might be, cheap as it might be, they are illegal unless approved and ratified by the House of Parliament. Like I said, 'ab initio.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not unaware of the relevance of Parliament in this particular matter and also recognising the integrity of Parliament in law making. I want to therefore humbly present to you, consistent with S.O 18[1] and [2], to ratify the Stakeholders Communiqué on the agreed toll fees for tricycles, vehicles and trailers plying the Wellington/Masiaka highway changed downwardly for ratification. I thank you, Mr Speaker *[Applause]*

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I will be taking only two from each sides because we have to leave at 2:00 p.m. to witness the burial of the mudslide victims. As a Parliament, we are also part of what is happening. So, we should not be oblivious of that fact. It is very important and that is why we should be spending more time on the tribute. We are just here to talk about a reduction on prices and nothing more. So, talking about a reduction on price should not be an issue.

**HON. KOMBOR KAMARA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, make sure you speak within the topic.

**HON. KOMBOR KAMARA:** I will do just that, Mr Speaker. I want to first of all thank the Minister for making himself available to the Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure without a summon. And today, he is making himself available to the entire House, which I know he knows the effects.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, this document we are talking about was presented to this House couple of months ago. This is because we are the people's representatives and we have been getting lot of resentments from our constituents about the toll gate fees. As their representatives, we listened to them and we looked at the document carefully.

We were not satisfied with the document in its entirety. So, this document was thrown out to enable them undertake more consultations with the people. This is because you cannot take development to the people when the people are not embracing the development. So, they came back with the adjusted document, which this House unanimously ratified. However, there were pushing and shuffling within the community. What happened? The Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure, who had just explained in detailed as to why the prices were adjusted, summoned a meeting of all stakeholders in this country; i.e., the road users, the Drivers' Union, the Bike Riders, Civil Society, Parliament, traders and even the consumers. These different facets were present in that consultative meeting and all these stakeholders unanimously agreed on a communiqué which they all signed. This communiqué represents the voices of the people of this country and we are representing them here. Sometimes we may not like it, but we must do what is supposed to be done for the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have also held workshops from Waterloo to Masiaka. In fact, we have just returned from Masiaka three days ago and every representative applauded this venture. They are very desperate to see an innovation in this country which is the toll system. It might be difficult for some people because this is a new phenomenon; but as the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day. You have to have a starting point and this is very new to the people of this country. Things are really difficult, but I think the people applauded the venture and they agreed. They were very happy with all the consultative meetings we have held. They were also happy with the adjusted prices. In fact some of them said, oh, you have done so much for us from **Le 48,000** for a sedan to **Le 12,000**. That was a remarkable reduction from **Le 900,000** for trailers to **Le 500,000**. They were so happy that the prices were brought down for their comfort.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this communiqué represents the voices of the people of Sierra Leone. These are the people we represent in this Parliament. So, without much ado, I think the communiqué signed by all these people in the country is in place. However, I want to raise a concern relating to the second bullet point, which

came with the original contract. And that is the only area I want to emphasise, so that we look into the document properly. It comes with the provision of market area in the project.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, please time.

**HON. KOMBOR KAMARA:** The people in that corridor wanted those markets.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, we are not here to talk about market, but the reduction of prices.

**HON. KOMBOR KAMARA:** Well, the prices have been accepted by the people of Sierra Leone and that is why they signed this communiqué. So, I stand here to inform my colleague Honourable Members that this communiqué has been signed and it represents the voices of the people of this country. I want to crave your indulgence that we ratify this document.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister for bringing this Agreement to this House. I want to take the angle taken by Honourable Kombor Kamara. Before now, this Honourable House agreed and ratified the initial prices for the toll road we are talking about. In that regard, I want to once again thank the Minister of Works for painstakingly bringing the stakeholders on board, so that they could revisit or renegotiate this unit price per toll.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is not very clear to me in this whole process is the fact that we have three tolls that have already started functioning. However, if you look at the work done, it would not be appreciated by most members of the public. I want the Minister to explain clearly, so that members of public can understand why work has almost completed from Wellington to Hastings and nothing much has been done beyond Hastings. There are toll gates at Songo and Masiaka and they are collecting fees in all the toll gates when much has not been done in those areas. I think this is a major concern.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Minister, I hope you are taking notes. Honourable Kombor, do not interfere.

**HON. SUAHILO M. KOROMA:** I know that work has started, but it has not gone that far, Mr Speaker. I am basically articulating the views of the public in this Matter. I want the Minister to throw light on that issue. I do not doubt his ability to actually explain to this Parliament on behalf of Sierra Leone. I want our people to get it clearly from the horse's mouth. Work has been done from Wellington to Hastings, but we are paying at all toll gates, even at Songo and Masiaka, where much has not been done.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much.

**HON. ABU B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am not going to waste any more time because like you said, we need time to debate other issues. I am just going to the concerns on the toll road. When the Minister came here the last time, we had a consultative meeting with him in Committee Room 1 and we brought a concern under bullet point two; i.e., the building of markets which is in the contract Agreement. The Minister agreed that he is not going to oppose our concern. We have told our people that markets were going to be constructed. However, in his presentation today, he did not say anything about it. He acknowledged that Parliament has the right to change what is in this communiqué. So, we are now craving the indulgence of the Minister to include market in the project, as stated in the original project document. That is my concern.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I know the Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai was telling me that the Minority Leader would be wrapping up and he would explain all what he had wanted to say to the Minority Leader.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI [*Deputy Minority Leader of the House*]:** I did not say that to you, Mr Speaker. It is for the records.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, you will contribute later. You are going to say something, but let me give him few minutes. I state here that nobody can intimidate me. Honourable Frank Kposowa, you know me very well that I am fearless.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have been exonerated today because before now, I have been talking about the toll prices that were passed in this House. I told this House that the prices were very high for the people of this country, considering the current economic situation in the country. I said that people would not afford to pay; and that it would bring more hardship to the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister because he was not part of the Ministry when this document was signed, but he is here today to ask all of us to reduce the amount because of the current economic situation that is very worrisome. This Agreement is not just talking about the reduction in toll gates prices. I have been saying this time without number that we should have an alternative route rather than just the toll road. It has been said in this document that they are going to pave an optional route. It is in the document, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, he is talking to the Minister and we have to listen to him.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister conceded and this Government conceded that we should have an optional route; and that the prices should be reviewed. Again, I have been expecting more reviews to be done on this Agreement. Sierra Leoneans are going to pay for this road and we are going to be paying toll fees for 27 years. I am doing this presentation in tandem with the original contract. With the leave of Mr Speaker, I will read on Page 8 of the original contract, Article 2.5 states, **“the Government of Sierra Leone shall be receiving 5% during period in which we are going to pay the loan, and after completion of the loan, the government of Sierra Leone will be receiving 10%.”** Presently, we have started paying toll gate fees when the road is **10%** complete. This means that our own part of the agreement, which is the **5%** for us, should be received by us

according to Article 2.5.2 in the original contract says China Railway Seventh Group [CRSG] is not going to give us our own **5%**. They are going to use our own **5%** as a government to construct the **90%** remaining road. This means that the people of Sierra Leone are going to pay for this road when the road is only **10%** complete. To me, the remaining **90%** is going to be paid by the people of this country. How can you tax us to pay for a road which we are constructing with our own moneys for 27 years? Mr Speaker, we are going to begin to pay **100%** of the toll road, starting from tomorrow. We have been using that road without paying toll fees.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you have 30 seconds left.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, assuming that you are leaving Masiaka, you will start paying toll fees from that point. We have been using that road from Masiaka to Waterloo without paying anything. This is bringing more sufferings to the people of this country. For security reason, they are saying they should remove our police officers from the highways. The toll road Agreement did not mention anything on security.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, where are you reading from and who said so?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** One of the bullet points on the second page.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please read it.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** According to the Agreement, the police are going to be replaced with CCTV cameras.

**THE SPEAKER:** Have you been following the MCC suggestions? Honourable Member, you cannot take the country backwards? The country has to move forward.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, please protect me.

**THE SPEAKER:** I cannot because you are misleading the House, Honourable Member. Please wrap up your contribution.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, as a Speaker of the House, you are not part of the debates. This debate is between the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party and the All Peoples' Congress and you are the referee in this case.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, please take your seat. Honourable Ansumana J. Kaikai, you have two minutes, please.

**HON. ANSUMUNA J. KAIKAI:** Mr Speaker, I concede.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Mr Speaker, if the senior Member has declined, I wonder why.

**HON. ANSUMANA J. KAIKAI:** Honourable Member, I conceded and not declined.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** To me, I am very happy we are here again today reviewing or trying to ratify what the stakeholders have done. What we are doing here is to ratify a document before us. This is a document that has to do with transportation and users of those roads. The document is before us, so that we can do justice to it. I am going to discuss this paper, not specifically the reduction in the prices. I want to refer the House to the third bullet point. It is talking about replacement of markets. To me, I am very keen that we still maintain the original Agreement which states that markets should be constructed. This is part of their cooperate social responsibilities.

On the area of security, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the CCTV cameras cannot do everything. I want to be very sincere with that. Again, we have to maintain the original agreement or the clause on the original Agreement that talks about the construction of markets, so that our people can economically benefit from this highway. I am insisting that we maintain that clause in the Agreement.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are talking about bringing revenue to the country. I have problems with the payment. For instance, if you go to bullet point 8, which has to do with residents, it says, "**residents along the toll road should be given concession for the use of the road.**" I see that to be very vague. What do you mean by 'residents along toll road should be given concession?' Giving concession in what way? Are they going to be using it as gratis or are they going to have a special payment plan? That is the kind of question I want to ask because we cannot just ratify.... - *[Interruption]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Minister will respond to that.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Thank you very much. We cannot just ratify what is just before us without clarifying certain issues. There are certain questions we need to ask for clarity. There are people who are residing along that road. When you use the road, you have to pay, but people have been residing along that road for a very long time. The question is what will happen to them? People were talking about concession and I want to know the type of concession.

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank those who did the negotiation for this reduction, especially the Honourable Minister of Works for empathising with the people of this country. The people are grumbling and we need to be sensitive to their sufferings. There is going to be a start, but how much? The amount to be paid has been one of the areas I was very keen to know when I was making my contribution in Committee Room No.1. I was very keen about the prices and I want to thank God that the Minister was sensitive enough to make adjustment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want clarification on Article 'a,' under coaches, light and medium vehicles. To me, some vehicles are being disadvantaged. For instance, when you talk about light vehicles, we have mini-vans, 34 sitters buses, 18 sitters and 12 sitters vehicles. The question is, are they going to be categorised under this **Le 18,000**? What is before us is the total amount from Wellington to Masiaka. Well, for the sake of proper sensitisation, we have to be doing it per toll gate. For instance, where there is **Le 3,000**, it means when you use one gate, you pay **Le 1,000**. If you are going through the three toll gates, you have to pay the **Le 3,000**. What we have here is the total number of passage. The question I want to ask the Minister is that how do we pay? For instance, if I am moving from Bo to Calaba Town, it means I will be using three toll gates. The question is, am I going to be paying per toll gate or at the end of the journey?

Having said that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am asking that with those corrections or clarifications, we ratify this Agreement.

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI** [*Minority Leader of the House*]: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the document before us is as a result of the consultations with many stakeholders in the transport sector, particularly the use of the toll road between Wellington and Masiaka. The result of those consultations has been not only the reduction in the fees, but also certain considerations that have been raised by the general public. This is what is in this communiqué. Therefore, we need to look at the whole document holistically, not only the charges that have been reduced, for which we are very happy, but we have to also look at the socio-economic situation and the context within which the toll road is located and that will invariably determine or dictate the amount. Currently, we know that a lot of people are unable to even provide the basic transport from one place to the other.

Again, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the attitude of commercial drivers is a very serious issue. This is because even when the price of fuel is reduced, the chances of those drivers reducing the cost of transportation are very slim. So, it is within that context that this communiqué is brought to us. We are happy that the charges for the toll road have been considerably reduced, maybe by one-third of the initial price. There should be a lot of sensitisation and explanation to the citizens of Sierra Leone, especially on this document and what the Agreement has been like. This is because even without the Minister explaining to us how these moneys are going to be paid, the document itself sometimes raises questions. For example, even when I saw the documents, I was asking whether we will start paying the **Le 3,000** at every toll gate. If you are a tricycle rider, do you start paying **Le 12,000**? These are some of the areas we need clarification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Minister to expedite the up grading of those alternative roads because you already said in this Agreement that the alternative routes will need to be made passable. One would have thought that even before the construction of the toll road started, all those alternative routes would have been upgraded and become functional, so that people will have a choice to use or not to use

the toll road. This is because if we look at the price we are paying if those alternatives are very bad, the cost you will incur in the maintenance of your vehicle will be great. You have to do some economic analysis in that regard. You will be asking yourself these questions whether I evade the payment of **Le 1,000** if I am using a tricycle or **Le 3,000** if I am using sedan vehicle by using the alternative roads that have not been made passable. These are some of the issues we need to address. We want you to expedite the improvement of those alternative routes as soon as possible, so that people will have a choice and are not forced to use the toll road. Presently, vehicles using the alternative routes are incurring serious damages because those alternative routes are very bad. Let people have a free choice and this very important.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to briefly talk about issue relating to the construction of markets along the toll road. I am sure you discussed it in detail. While we want to also match up to the Millennium Development Challenge [and requirement for a country like us], we want to do things in an instalment basis because the markets along those roads are still important. They should be the economic hubs in which people will go and sell or buy their own consumable goods for their houses. The markets are also social places and they are very important. They are also a means through which new technologies are adopted and diffused. When you come to those markets, maybe for the first time, and you see a new cassava variety that is not in your area, this is how we have been able to diffuse technology through these types of hubs. We do not understand some of these bullet points because we were not there. Why do you want to remove the markets at this time?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with regards to security, the police have been removed and replaced by cameras. The question is, how far will this camera go? In other words, between the toll roads, where are you going to install these cameras? Whatever you say, the cameras are limited in terms of the distance they can capture events. So, we want to know where these cameras are going to be located. If they are only going to be located around the premises of the toll gates, then in between the toll gates, a lot of anti-social and criminal activities will take place. That is why we use to

have our security personnel. It is not that they have captured everything or they have done the best of things; but for now, let us use the police and the cameras. We should use both, so that we will be able to analyse whether the cameras have reduced crimes or have led to more prosecutions and recording of crimes to a time that we can comfortably remove the police from the highways.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are some of the things we need to look at and I think it is a welcome idea. However, you need to do a lot of sensitisation. I want to agree with somebody who spoke about concession for people residing along the toll road. Who do you mean? How are you going to capture every individual that is residing along the road? How are you going to capture them? What about residents along the toll road, but depend on Waterloo to provide cement for the construction of their houses or the beaches to provide sand? How are you going to distinguish them? These are things you need to look at very carefully, so that when you give concession, it will be given to the right people. We have to make sure that those gaps will not be an avenue for non-residents in those areas to benefit from these concessions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much and we want to thank all those who in diverse ways in this Parliament have agitated loudly for these changes. As a Parliament, when we debated this Agreement, we did it from the point of view that our people would not be able to meet the initial charges that were put for the use of toll road. Let us study how it goes; and with time, you should come back to us in this Parliament and tell us what are the bottlenecks and the challenges. I thank you very much.

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH** [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, may I request that the Honourable Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure makes it a point of duty to circulate this document I have here with me? This is because we want every Member of Parliament to have a copy of it because it is an important document. It is so important that it contains a lot of information about the toll road system. The document will also help Members of Parliament to clear the doubts that are in the minds of some people.

For those who have travelled on the road within the last three to four days should know that this document is available in every toll station. I collected it on Monday when I was coming to Freetown from the provinces. Of course, it was free and it is going to be free. That is why I am insisting that this document is given to each Honourable Member. The document has a lot of information that is not even included in the Toll Road Agreement that was ratified by Parliament. For example, it has 16 bullet points, outlining the benefits of the toll road. I think every Honourable Member is entitled to that information; and to allay the fears of Honourable Members, Page 3 of this documents states that owners of private cars between the Hastings Toll Station and Masumaila Toll Station may buy a monthly card for just **Le 100,000** and have an unlimited access to all toll stations free of charge during the course of the month. Instead of paying **Le 4,000** regularly at every toll station, you will buy a monthly card for just **Le 100,000** and have unlimited access to all the tolls stations along the road. This is stipulated in this document and it allays the fears of the people residing along the road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other fears expressed by Honourable Members is the removal of the police along the road. Government is not removing the police from the entire road. They are removing the police check points that were originally on the road, where it is alleged that the police were charging for traffic regulation on that road. However, in terms of ordinary security, the police will be available. We know the fears of Members of Parliament and lots of other things usually happen along the road, apart from the traffic regulation. I want to state here that the police will be available constantly along the road. It is not only the Close Circuit Television [CCTV] cameras that are going to be left unattended. The CCTV cameras are going to be used there for the provision of traffic regulation and not the police because the usual fears expressed by the public is that they do not want to be paying to the police and the toll gate fees. So, that is the reason why the police are going to be excused from regulating the traffic along the road. These are the two major fears expressed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank Honourable Members who have spoken so eloquently about the advantages of the toll road. As of now, a lot of

marriages taking place in the Western Area are now using the toll stations to take photographs and lots of those pictures are now posted on WhatsApp. When you get there, you will begin to feel as if you are not within Sierra Leone because the type of facelift it has given to the road. So, these are issues that are given high visibility to the country and I want to believe that the traffic regulation and all those who will be travelling along that road will be enjoying the traffic on the road. The work on the road has not stopped. It is continuing; but as we all know, you cannot use tar on the road during the raining season. However, other construction aspects are going on. The Chinese have not stopped work on the road at all and we believe that the other segment will be completed very soon. I want to believe that the most important aspect in terms of construction analyses is on the first segment. It is only the first segment at Orogu that needed a new bridge of that length. Once that is completed, the rest of the road will be completed in a very short time. Even though the Agreement stipulates that the construction period is four years, we all know that the Chinese are always capable of achieving construction time shorter than the stipulated time in the Agreement. For example, the Makeni/Matotoka Road was constructed in less than the time that was stipulated in the Agreement. So, I am sure the Chinese are going to be on top of this road and they will complete the construction of this road within four years as stipulated in the Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all Honourable Members for their various contributions. We believe that the Government went into this Agreement, so that development can be facilitated. The total cost of the road is going to be **\$ 161,000,000**. If the Government has to do that road, I want to believe that we have to go out and take a loan. This time, however, it is a loan that we will be paying not at Government level, but individuals, so that we can start teaching out compatriots that development has to be paid for by every citizen of this nation and in such a way that the payment will not be felt by the people. This is because it is only when you travel you will have to pay that fee. If you do not travel, you will not pay. Again, we were assured by the Minister that we would still have the alternative routes for those who do

not want to pay the toll fees. Those options will be available to road users and it is entirely left with you to either use that road or the other options that are available.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank everybody for recognising the development that this road will provide and to also thank you for appreciating the Government for bringing this type of construction methodology in this country. I believe this is only going to be an example for future governments in this country. In other words, future governments are going to be using this system to enhance and facilitate the development of roads and other development programmes in this country. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. ALHAJI IBRAHIM KEMOH SESAY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to begin by acknowledging and thanking Members of Parliament from both sides of the isles for their patriotic intervention. The contributions from the opposition are very constructive; and to be honest, I was thinking that Members of the opposition will oppose this document. But observing the usefulness of this document and how it is good for the development of this country, I want to commend them *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to continue the normal vogue of Parliament in my response in responding to the Leadership of the House; i.e., the Leader of Government Business. Mr Speaker, the Members of Parliament have spoken and therefore, Ministers are expected to comply with their speeches. The two leaders have common concerns for the country regarding the toll gates. Therefore, I am going to respond to them. Let it be understood that the toll gate fees for tricycle for example, is **Le 3,000**, but you actually pay a thousand Leones per toll station. Therefore, any tricycle that leaves from Willington to Masiaka will pay **Le 1,000** at Hastings, **Le 1,000** at Songo and **Le 1,000** at Masiaka.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are talking about tolling, let us assume that somebody wants to go to Waterloo, then he/she is expected to pay **Le 1,000**. This is because we still consider that this economy is not yet beautiful as we expect it to be.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, both leaders also spoke about security. I want to remind Honourable Members that this communiqué was signed by users, operators and managers of the road, including specifically the Petty Traders Union of Sierra Leone, Consumer Protection Agency, Indigenous Transport Owners Association, Sierra Leone Police, SLRA, Motor Drivers Union, Sierra Leone Commercial Tricycle Association, Road for Development Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. I mentioned these names because both leaders spoke about the Sierra Leone Police. I want to allay their fears that the Police are part of the decision making process in this Agreement. They took part in making sure that we remove check points. I am aware that we are concerned about security, but they also agreed that all the drivers complained about Mile 38 Check Point. Some of them told us that they pay at least **Le 500,000** a day. That is what they told us and there was no authority to say otherwise. Therefore, all of us, including the Police, agreed that we remove that checkpoint and in lieu of it, we put cameras. That was also common between the two Leaders.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, both leaders spoke about the markets. With respect to the Parliamentary Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure, I have no business talking about market here if they have done their job. When I came to attend a meeting with Committee on Works, I told them that the only thing Parliament cannot do is to change a man to a woman. I did say so. You said there should be market. If people think it there should be cameras and you do not want cameras, so be it. Who is the Minister of Works to say otherwise? I have no jurisdiction and I want to emphasise that in terms of parliamentary laws, Ministers have no jurisdiction. I am not patronising Members of Parliament, but I do understand the role of Parliament in making laws. So, let me remind Members of the Committee and the whole House that in the last Committee meeting, we agreed to construct the markets. It is done. So, it is not an issue again.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we agreed in the Committee Room 1 that Members of Parliament wanted the markets and that was agreed upon. However, we have to come here for ratification and we have done that. When we are done, we are going to

put the markets in their places. I want to underscore the point that Parliament is the only authority in this country that can make and unmake laws and no other person has that authority; otherwise I have no business coming here. I would have just sat in my office and say, **Le 4,000, Le 5,000** etc. It goes without saying that the price from **Le 38,000** to **Le 12,000** is a reduction and it is good for the country, but I am here because it would have been illegal. I am only here because even if I put it down to **Le 1,000** throughout, it will still be illegal. I have to come here for ratification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Bo wanted to know about the replacement of markets. I hope I have dealt with that concern. Additionally, we spoke about special fees; and thankfully, the Majority Leader has spoken on that issue. When we say special fee, we mean those that reside in the toll areas. And as he has explained, if you leave Masiaka, Waterloo or Hastings, you cannot pay like me because it is likely for you to travel throughout the day. So, it is about **Le 360,000** against **Le 100,000** a month. If you pay the normal fee, which is **Le 360,000** and use the road once a day, it will be at your own disadvantage.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member also spoke about how we pay. Well, I just said that the Majority Leader mentioned that the special fees are meant for those that reside in the affected areas. We cannot ascertain how many times they go through the toll road, but we will give them a pass that they pay **Le 100,000** per month. This means they will only pay **Le 100,000** for 30 days. So, if you divide that by 30 days, you will be paying **Le 4,000** per day; and even if you use all the toll gates, you will pay **Le 4,000**. Let us assume that you use the road once a day, it will amount to **Le 360,000** a month. We are saying that instead of **Le 360,000**, it should be **Le 100,000** a month. You might even use the road a million times. I hope it is clear now. With regards how payments are going to be done, we are going to pay at every toll gate, and not holistically.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have spoken on queries raised by Honourable Bashiru Silikie. The Minority Leader also spoke about the issue of CCTV cameras. Her concern was whether to replace the police with the CCTV cameras or not. We are not

replacing the Police with the cameras. As a matter of fact, the Police are going to work with the cameras at every toll gate. These cameras will relay information from the service areas to server room and to the police stations. When using that road, once your vehicle approaches the toll gate, you will be captured. They will see your vehicle number plates and the number of people in that vehicle. They will know your vehicle registration through Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority [SLRSA]. For example, some of the vehicles they usually steal from Freetown and taken to other parts of the country; i.e., the provinces will be captured once they pass through the toll gates. We will have a record of the number plates of the vehicle, the picture of the drivers and the passengers in that stolen vehicle. Once you approach the first toll gate, they will capture the registration numbers of the vehicle and the face of the driver. So, they are working together.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Majority Leader of the House did request that we circulate the document that he has with him. I am obliged and I am going to make sure that every Member of Parliament has a copy of that document. It is at the toll gates. You will get one once you pass there. Like the Leader said, the toll gates have now become a vogue in this country and now it is like a photo graph studio. In fact to say the least, plenty of Sierra Leoneans today have their What Sapp profile pictures taken at the toll gates which demonstrate the fact that people are appreciative of development. I hope I have spoken to all of your concerns and if there is any that I have left there is room in my Ministry for queries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the last issue I want to talk about is the alternative route. Firstly, I want us to understand that optional is the same as alternative. And when we say alternative or optional road, we mean passable road; a road that you can pass through. It is not going to be as fine as the paved road, but you will pass through it. The Minority Leader was concerned about working on the alternative road. Let me state that we are working on it now and it is now passable. Mr Speaker, let us assume that you do not want to pay the toll gate fees, you can pass by Gloucester and go by the toll without paying anything. They are not going to arrest you for that. So, please

be aware of the fact that Government is very sensitive to the concerns of Sierra Leoneans. I want to assure this House that police patrol has not been stopped and there is going to be police patrol on the highways.

Having said that, Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I move that the Stakeholders Communiqué on the agreed toll fees for tricycles, vehicles and trailers plying the Willington/Masiaka Road and related matters be ratified as amended.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Government Motion by the Minister of Works, Housing and Infrastructure has been ratified as amended]*

#### **IV. TRIBUTES BY HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT TO THE MEMORY OF OUR COMPATRIOTS WHO HAVE BEEN CALLED TO ETERNITY BY GOD ALMIGHTY, FOLLOWING THE FLOOD AND MUDSLIDE DISASTER ON MONDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2017**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before we commence with the tributes, I would like to suggest that we observe a minute of silence prayers. So, I will kindly ask that we rise and observe a moment of silence for the souls of the departed [A moment of silence prayers is observed]. May their souls rest in perfect peace.

Honourable Members, before we start this particular item on the Order Paper, I want perfect decorum. I want to make it known here that anyone who misbehaves will leave the Chambers. This is a serious and it is totally different. I know many people will want to say something; and as I said earlier, the funeral itself is going to take place at 2:00 p.m. today. In that regard, some of us will be attending the funeral service. We have to ensure that we manage our time properly.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. IBRAHIM PARTEH M. BAH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to contribute to the tribute of our compatriots who have been called to eternity by God Almighty, following the flood disaster on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am with a heavy heart to state here since I took the solemn oath in this Honourable House to serve my people as a Member of Parliament, this is the most difficult contribution I am making in this House. However, let me hastily express my appreciation and gratitude to this noble House and of course to the Leadership for their wisdom in terms of including this item on the Order for us MPs. Our nation is crying. This is unprecedented. I believe you will agree with me that we have never seen this kind of catastrophe before in this country. I always say that the test of a man is not when things are rosy or when things are good, but when a man is faced with challenges. I am confident that with cooperation, unity, supports and endless condolences have been overwhelming and I strongly believe that we will overcome any future occurrence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me give a brief background of what has happened. On that Monday morning at about 6:45 a.m., I received many calls from my local leaders; i.e., the Chiefs and youths about the mudslide at Mount Sugar Loaf. By virtue of the number of calls that I received, I immediately sent text messages to the Inspector General of Police, Office of National Security [ONS], Assistance Inspector General Alshiek Kamara, who is responsible for operations, and asked them to support me to convey the information to other relevant institutions to come to the aid of those communities. Knowing the President to be a caring President, I also sent him a text message. I left home immediately to the scene. It was difficult to comprehend and the whole area was in disarray. People were confused and they were crying everywhere. I called few radio stations and I must acknowledge the corporation that I received from Universal Radio. They told me that since the situation was very serious, they should air what I was going to say live on air, so that the message could be received directly by the public. They were of the view that hearing from the horse's mouth would attract urgent response. Indeed, Mr Josiah Paris did that and I am very grateful to him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, within the shortest period of time, I saw ambulances, the Military, the Office of National Security [ONS] and everybody was there. Again, Government Ministers; i.e., such as the Ministers of Works, Trade, Health

and Internal Affairs came to the scene. Mr Speaker, when the Vice President saw the devastation, he summoned an emergency meeting to brainstorm on actions to be taken. I was there and of course with my Councillor and other stakeholders. The Minister of Works was asked to bring excavators and other machines to help the rescue and evacuate the deceased and those who were wounded. The Minister of Internal Affairs was asked to fortify the area with Police Officers. The Armed Forces were also there, led by Major Colonel Bah. The Office of National Security, represented by Mr Kamara and a lady name, Yvonne Aki Sawyer. Madam Cooper also witnessed the scene. So, we were all there together with the Inspector General of Police and his Assistant. It was like a situation room and we were all tasked with certain responsibilities. I was asked to find accommodation for the wounded and those suffering from traumatic stress. I got a place for those people. The ambulance came and took them to the hospital.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, after a while, the President came to the scene and he summoned an emergency Cabinet Meeting immediately. I was very moved by his selflessness. He went down to where the disaster actually took place. He was moved by what he saw and I saw empathy and sympathy in his eyes. His eyes were red, which means that he was in tears. He joined in consoling my people in that community. The people felt relieved. People were crying, S.O 5[2] 'ar don lose all me people them en wudat ar go look up to again;' i.e. I have lost all my people and who am I going to look up to again? Due to the presence of the President, people had hope that they are going to be taken care of and indeed our partners like the World Health Organisation [WHO], Red Cross, World Food Programme [WFP], etc., came to our aid. We had other emergency meetings with our partners and they were all asking what they could do. I want to state here that we started receiving wet foods in the evening. Social Welfare Ministry came and they provided psychosocial support.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is not the time to throw aspersions or play blame games or pointing fingers at each other, but rather a time for us to come together. I am confident that this is a great nation and we are capable of doing great

things if we come together. Personally, I was moved by the support I received from Members of this Honourable House. The Deputy Speaker was there, Honourable Chernor R. M. Bah, Honourable Alhassan Kamara, Honourable Bashiru Silikie, Honourable Sidi M Tunis and the Minority Leader. In fact, the Minority Leader brought bags of rice as her personal support to the mudslide victims. Initially, we agreed to give all the supplies to a special team, which was headed by the Disaster Management team of ONS. However, the Minority Leader stated that Members of Parliament should be part of that team. She came to me personally and made those donations. Honourable Dr Michele Sho-Sawyer and Honourable Benneh Bangura were also there. Some of my constituents were also included to participate and we thought it fit that the local people should be involved in the process. Honourable Ibrahim Ben Kargbo and majority of Members of Parliament were there. Honourable Amadu Kanu and the Chief Whip of Parliament were all present.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the response were swift because of the unity we demonstrated. I want to state here that if we continue in this spirit, we will do more great things. I am very happy with the feedback I am getting from my constituents. Although this is a difficult time, but the cooperation they are getting from the Government is helping them. The Speaker has just stated that His Excellency the President would be leading us to give those who have lost their lives a befitting funeral at Waterloo. I am sure all of us will be there because this could have happened to anyone of us. I am sure there are Members of Parliament who lost their family members. An Honourable Member was telling me that he has family members who were also affected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to seize this opportunity to console ourselves. May their souls rest in peace. We would rise above this as Sierra Leoneans. May God bless us all and May God bless Sierra Leone. I thank you very much for your support and cooperation.

*Suspension of S.O. 5[2]*

**HON. SHEKU SANNOH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me join Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah in thanking this Honourable House for bringing to the fore the aspect of representation by a Member of Parliament. Anytime I am asked to make a contribution that has to do with the event that occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 eyes are filled with blood. Nonetheless, because it has to do with Member of Parliament responsible for Constituency 112 which centres around the people of Mortormeh on the Eastern part of my Constituency, I have no option but to make a brief statement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have listened and I am still listening to people who are describing the incident that took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017. This is because I was present at the scene. I want to believe that no amount of words put together in our alphabet or the Queen's description will be enough to describe the incident that happened on that day. Some people referred to it as a disaster; some said it was a calamity; some said it was catastrophic. I was present and my constituents suffered gruesomely as a result of the mudslide. As I said earlier, no amount of words will describe the disaster that took place in this country. This is a calamity that nobody will be able to quantify what happened on that date.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on the early hours of the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 the people of Pentagon, Kamayamah, Kondi Farm, Kaningo, the lower part of Sheriff Drive, Juba Bridge and Crab Town suffered gruesomely from a mudslide. The mudslide started at Mortormeh, down to the Riverine Area of my Constituency. It will interest Members of Parliament to know that the areas mentioned had a lot of two and three storey houses. If you have time to go to that place, you will find nothing as we speak. What you will find there is a flat ground. You will not believe that two or three storey houses ever existed in that area. As I speak, people are still calling me because they are still discovering dead bodies. Up to this moment the youths of my Constituency, the Military Personnel, the Police officers; they are right in the stream there taking dead bodies. It

is enough for us to understand what exactly my people suffered as a result of the incident that took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we speak, communities are completely disconnected. There were bridges like the Pentagon Bridge, linking to where we call Jah Kingdom, where thousands of people reside. Presently, there is no way they could be in the position to access Pentagon as a result of the disconnection of these bridges. Those bridges I am talking about were motorable bridges. We used to have foot-bridges; i.e., if you are not in position to use the motorable bridge, you can use the foot-bridge. As we speak, people are completely disconnected; but thankfully enough, I want to personally thank His Excellency the President for demonstrating his Leadership qualities. Yesterday, I received His Excellency the President not on the flat land of Pentagon. He went down to the stream where houses were constructed that is the area where the mudslide took place. He went there and he saw how people suffered. He asked questions and he told me that structures would be erected soonest in order to help mitigate the problems of people that are now displaced and also mitigate the problem of unforeseen disaster that may likely occur as a result of either torrential rainfall or as a result of mudslide.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the role of the social media. I have been following the social media and it saddens me anytime I see photos of dead people on my phone. People are posting negative pictures, thereby disgracing the deceased. We were on the scene and we saw exactly what happened. I want to refer this Honourable House, through Members of Parliament to our responsibility. One key responsibility of citizens is in Section 13[b] of the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone. That provision talks about nationalism, which means that we have to be nationalistic and patriotic. We have to show that we are patriotic in this present moment. We have lost people with exuberance and potentials in a gruesome accident. It is heartbroken to see people portraying negative pictures and reports as to what happened.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank Honourable Members that gave their support, especially the Minority Leader of this House. She called me on that

day and told me that 'we are in this fight. I will join you to go and sympathise with people that are suffering from the event.' Also, the Deputy Speaker and a host of other colleague Members of Parliament were present. Some were unable to go to my Constituency, but they provided support in diverse ways. I want to thank this Honourable House for active role it took in this mourning moment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the youths of this country, especially those in my Constituency for being magnanimous. They responded swiftly when the accident took place. Again, the role of the Military and the police cannot be underestimated. They are always in readiness to respond to such situations. If you go to my Constituency, Constituency 112, where the mudslide took place, you will find out that there is no way I will be able to quantifying the disaster because over five hundred houses were knocked down and thousands of people are now displaced.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my people, I am still asking for more supports. I am also calling on the Ministry of Works and Sierra Leone Road Authority [SLRA] to put temporal measures in place in terms of connecting the different communities. Once again, I want to thank this Honourable House, His Excellency the President and other organisations that are coming to our aid. Thank you very much.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. BRAIMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my Bible has assured me that in every situation and circumstance, you give thanks to the Lord. Therefore, I want to preface my tribute in glorifying God with the following song:

'Thank you Lord you are Holy, and forever you are Lord and forever you are Lord, thank you Lord you are merciful and forever you are Lord.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, God is indeed good. This is a moment that we are not supposed to play with because it very serious. I was not here for the past two weeks. I have been in Kailahun and I only came back last night. Whilst in Kailahun, I have been reading postings on Facebook. People were posting aspersions and blaming others for what happened. I said oh my God, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing. If you are banking on your intelligence and technology, there

would have been no Tsunami in this world. If you are banking on your technology and your science, places like China would not have experienced calamities because of their consciousness of their environment. Alas, it has happened. When I saw those pictures, the first person I thought about when I was in Kailahun is Honourable Sheku Sannoh. He usually calls me anytime there is any sitting. Anytime he calls me, he always says; S.O 2, 'bo wi get sitting tumara;' [we have sitting tomorrow]. Somebody called and told me that Kamayama and Lumley were involved. I was afraid because I have never spoken to him since the incident took place except today. I want to extend my sympathy to him. I was afraid to call him because I did not want somebody to tell me that such has happened. I was in tears on Monday night and I forced myself to travel. A neighbour in Pendembu called to tell me that our people resided where the incident took place. He said that seventeen of our kissi brothers from that end lost their lives. I never abandoned that information. I said let me be with you until such time when at least I will try to console you before leaving. I left yesterday to come to Freetown. It is a pity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I sympathise with Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah, Honourable Sheku Sannoh and all those who lost their lives. The Lord gave and He has taken. May the Lord Almighty allow them to rest in perfect peace. Thank you very much.

**HON. IBRAHIM R. BUNDU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is another gloomy day for Sierra Leone. No amount of words will describe what Sierra Leone has just suffered from, considering the fact that a little over two years ago, we were in this Parliament for another similar incident.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Indonesia, I think it hosts the largest population of Muslims in the world. I think that is where you have the largest population of Muslims, but when God struck, nobody, especially those who are Muslims will understand why. For us in Sierra Leone, the Speaker who spoke before me just said that we thank God for every situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Japan on their last Tsunami, they were quoted in one of the British Broadcasting Cooperation's [BBC] programmes as being so confident against the backdrop of their scientific advancement that there will never be any Tsunami in that country. But with God's time, it happened. Sierra Leone is a country of resilience. I want to associate myself with the sufferings of our colleagues who are direct representatives of the affected areas. We all suffered in diverse ways. Some are representatives of the areas affected; others are direct relatives of those who perished; others are friends or loved ones. This is why I want to commend the leadership for coming with this initiative. Last night, somebody asked me where is Parliament in all of these? This means that the people are very sensitive to the role of Parliament. Fortunately for me, I was in possession of the Order Paper. I read it out to him. He is a senior citizen of this country. I want to thank the Leadership for this initiative. Some of us have received numerous calls internationally about this disaster. We will assure you that it was good that this Parliament also establish relations with other Parliaments. I am sure these relationships will become very handy, both regional and international bodies.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join the nation to mourn the fallen heroes and heroines. I join my colleagues who are directly affected by this and all of us as a nation. I am sure that is why in the wisdom of the Government, we have declared a state of mourning. I am sure before Monday morning, our meeting was geared towards things that have to do with our coming back here during election or not coming back here after election. Therefore God is the Master. This country needs prayers and I want to end by saying that this should be a moment of lessons learnt. We have gone through trying times and we should learn from those lessons. I am sure that covers our diverse ways in terms of reporting about issues of this nature. The paramount thing we are all looking at is how we react or subscribe to this critical time and the contributions we can make. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**HON. IBRAHIM BEN KARGO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, by way of making a preface in remembering our fellow compatriots, may I also state that

this House has demonstrated a sense of patriotism by creating a forum that has allowed us to remember our fallen relatives. I am a resident in one of the areas affected. In fact, the Member of Parliament for the Freetown Area is Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah. I reside at Regent. Indeed, the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 was a historic day. Early in the morning, everything trembled, including the refrigerator in my bedroom and my wife wanted to know what has happened. I then said this could be a submarine quake.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, every morning, I used to stand by the window, the corridor in my bedroom, to shave and one of the sights I always enjoyed is a small Flat building occupied by a lady and her children. That morning, I went to the balcony and I found out that the house was no longer there, which means the house disappeared in the mud. By the time I went down to the living room, my house was over populated with neighbours who have been literally driven from their homes by the torrential rain the night before.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for those of us who reside around that area, we also know that there are still quite a number of people who are still under the rubble. We should find ways of appeasing their relatives to go in search of them. I also want to state here that contrary to the views held by so many Sierra Leoneans, Sierra Leone is a united country. That morning, I saw unity being displayed by Sierra Leoneans *[Applause]*. It never mattered whether you are from the North or from the South or from the East, or from the All People's Congress [APC] or from the Sierra Leone Peoples' Party [SLPP], everybody was concerned about the future of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, by the time it was 9:00 a.m., some of us decided to find out and we discovered that the other side of the Hill, where we had so many shanty houses were no longer there. It simply had swept away. So, if we pay tribute to the dead or our citizens, we are not only paying tribute to those who reside in Freetown. Twenty-eight people from my own Constituency died. Those were poor people who came to Freetown to make a living and they stayed there. They lived there and made there their home and in the process they lost their lives. I am also aware that people who were came from places like Bo or Kenema or Kabala [who had come to

Freetown to make a living], have also lost their lives. So, we are stating here that this is a national catastrophe. We are not restricting this tribute to just the people resident in Freetown, Regent and Lumley, but the whole country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the causative factor for this disaster will be examined later. As a Geographer by training, I know that the geomorphology of that area was always posing threats to the lives of people. The Vice President, at one time and myself and other Sierra Leoneans were part of the group that decided to identify the Green Belt. We did that in order to inform our people that if you build your house below the Green Belt, it will create disaster for you one day. Up to this time, the Green Belt is actually visible. For some reasons, some people, either out of poverty or out of disregard for the law, built houses below the Green Belt. And when the rain came, it swept away everything and our people died. The question is, what do we do to avoid future disaster of this nature? It is so simple to say that we have lost lives, but it is also important for us to say that never again should we allow such calamity in our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we the citizens of this country must abide by the laws of this country. If there are rules, regulations and laws, let us abide by them because these are meant to ensure that people are protected. The laws are put together by knowledgeable people who had good reasons to introduce them.

Having stated that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to state here that our people will go to Heaven. Why will they go to Heaven? They died innocently. Some of us who could have helped them to avoid this calamity failed to do so. We also saw what happened in trying to retrieve the dead bodies. We discovered that we lacked a pack of mechanisms in Sierra Leone. Apart from the two machines that were trying to remove the dead bodies, we were actually using our hands to remove our people. Perhaps, what we should do is to plead with the authorities and those in charge of the security of the state, to ensure that we have a back-up mechanism or an emergency mechanism for such situations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will say thanks to all those who have demonstrated love for their country; who have exhibited a sense of patriotism; and who sincerely

believe that the problem on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 was a problem for the whole of Sierra Leone. Our President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma, demonstrated a sense of patriotism, which is an exceptional leadership. All of us walked down the Hills and he went to the site where people lost their lives. If you ask him now, he is more knowledgeable about what happened than most of us. That is what I call a good President [Applause]. On the ground, he put in place mechanisms to continue to protect those who were going through difficulties. There were other Sierra Leoneans who cared. The Deputy Speaker went there not because I reside there as his own relative, but because he saw the need to be part and parcel of the team that will address the situation. These are the people we call Patriots. Other people were there as well; i.e., the Vice President, the Minority Leader, Rtd Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, and a host of others.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to be reminded that we went through difficult times during the Ebola scourge. People went to the radio and misled people. And now, we are hearing that people are going to the radio, attempting to explain things which they do not understand at all. Perhaps, what we should do, as citizens, is to make sure that we identify people who are knowledgeable on issues and tell them to go to the radio and television to educate the public. This is not a matter of politics, but an issue of addressing a serious matter that has affected our people and this country. In doing so, we should be forthright and knowledgeable before we allow people to go to the radio to talk about issues which ought to be said, so that things like this will not happen in this country anymore.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Like I said, none of these people knew they were going to die the following day. I was watching South African Television where a problem was existing in China and India; i.e., torrential rain. The following morning, we had our own problem. Today, I am here and I want to be part of this group to pay tribute to our countrymen.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I want to plead that we give the Chief Whip two minutes because he has to go to Waterloo now. We have to bring this sitting to an end at 1:15 p.m.

**HON. CLAUDE D. M. KAMANDA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a nation, Sierra Leone is crying; Parliament is crying; Western Rural District Council and the Freetown City Council are also crying. As a nation, this is an unending story. Let us go down memory lane that this incident happened on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017. On the 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1945, the same incident happened in this country at Charlotte Village. This time, it happened at Regent Village, a neighbouring community. As the people's representative, I want to join other speakers to send out our condolences to the families who lost their loved ones; condolence to the Members of Parliament who have lost their constituents; like Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah; Honourable Sheku Sannoh, to name but a few. That tells you that Parliament is also mourning. We also want to say thanks to the Government for the swift action taken on the incident. Many thanks go to the rescue teams and the youths out there. I also want to thank our security forces and even the press for informing the World about what has happened to this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as mentioned by other speakers, this is a trying time for our country. We need to pray as a people. This is not the time for a blame game, but a period for reflection; a time for us to share our experiences; and a time to document what has happened, so that tomorrow the story will be told.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will be hosting the corpses. The new constituency, Constituency 107, we have prepared three [300] hundred graves. You can go there and see the site. It is terrible and pathetic. Three hundred graves have been dug for the corpses. After this tribute, I will be leaving to the grave site.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Member, on behalf of the people of Constituency 106 and Constituency 107, which are new constituencies, we want to extend our condolences to the bereaved families, Members of Parliament, Government and Parliament. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I call on Honourable Helen Kuyembeh. Please let us keep to the two minutes rule. We know it is difficult, but please let us endeavour to go according to the rule.

**HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will start my tribute by publicly saying that on behalf of the Sierra Leone House of Parliament, we do mourn with the people of Sierra Leone. I am saying this specifically because some of the speakers who spoke earlier talked about the role of Parliament in this issue. Other people have been asking what parliamentarians are doing and I can testify to that. The House of Parliament is part of this country and we owe it to the people of this country to mourn with them when they mourn. So, on behalf of the House of Parliament and the staff that work in this very noble House, I wish to express to the people of this nation that we are mourning with them and we are in solidarity with them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, having heard from colleague Members of Parliament, I would not want to restate what has already been said. I just want to make it clear here that we are also mourning. We are sad, but it is time for us to act swiftly. I am saying this because for several months now, most Members of Parliament have heard or witnessed the discussion that Sierra Leone is prone to disaster in terms of Climate Change. What am I saying? That was a clear signal to all of us to start putting our house in order. It could not be done quickly as is expected because what has been done has been done. People have built their houses and you could not just go there and move them. Yes, our hearts are heavy, but it is this time we need to start taking actions. Honestly, it is not over yet. Let us be realistic with the fact. We are sad and we do not want this to happen again, but it is not over yet. Most of us in this House or all of us are hearing from international radios and broadcast that it is not over yet. This could happen again and we need to do something. Therefore, the issue is that we have to work individually and collectively, so that if there is another occurrence, we will be able to shape it out a little bit, so that it will not hurt as much as it has hurt us now.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in as much as we are not casting blames, we need to start thinking. As the House of Parliament, which is the second body in terms of Executive Powers, let us put our house in order. Let us think and create a 'think-tank' in terms of what we can do. What mechanisms are we going to put in place, so that if there is a landslide next week or the week after, it will not be as grave as this one?

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to send our heartfelt condolences on behalf of this Honourable House to the people of this country. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. P.C. SHEKU A. T. FASULUKU SONSIAMA III:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what happened in this country at Regent on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 touches nearly everybody. I come from Kono and I want to let this Parliament know that I have also lost more than ten people from my Chiefdom in this incident. I want to join Honourable Helen Kuyembeh, Honourable Ibrahim Bundu, and Honourable I. B. Kargbo in terms of putting emphasis on the actions to be taken. We have to work as a team, so that the lessons we are going to learn from this disaster could be used wisely to plan the future of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is high time we started paying attention on planning this country properly. We have to know where people should live; we have to know lands for Agricultural activities; and we have to allocate land for Forestry Conservation. There should be no go areas in terms of human habitation on lands meant for specific purposes. In this Well, I said this very recently when we were trying to approve the Board Chairman of the National Protected Area Authority [NPAA] that our relationship with the environment is symbiotic. If we do not look after the environment, it will never look after us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable members, I have heard about predictions in the Cable News Network [CNN] about the rainfall pattern. As far as I know, Sierra Leone has rainy season and one dry season every year. The months of July and August are known for torrential rains every year. In other words, we are having more rains during these two months. We used to have maximum rains in this country in July and August, but

strangely enough, we are now having more rains in the last two weeks in September, which is very strange.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not want to take much of your time, but this incident happened what I want to refer in my speech as catchment area or water-shed area. My concern is that we have lost so many people and property. From what I have heard, there are still over six hundred people that we have not been able to account for. This happened off stream because of the amount of mudslide that came from Mount Sugar Loaf forced a lot of water downstream which was responsible for the flood downstream.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have been told that most of the people who were living in these communities were surviving on spring water; water coming from the rocks. We have over six hundred people unaccounted for. I am not an expert, but I believe it is high time we tell those people at Mortormeh, Regent and Crab Town in Lumley to be very careful about what they do with this water until we are sure of what will happen at the end of the day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of myself and the people of Kono, I want to join the Government to extend our sympathy to the bereaved families. It is sad, but we have to learn lessons from this and take strong actions. May their souls rest in peace.

**HON. AMADU FOFANA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am devastated and confused at this moment because I was in the United Kingdom mourning the loss of eight hundred people in the Greenfield Tower when I heard this incident in Sierra Leone. My Constituency is seriously affected. I want to join colleague Members of Parliament to send condolence message to the bereaved families.

I want to end by thanking the Government, the Police, the Military, the ONS, the volunteers and the abled people at the mortuary, who are looking after these bodies. I also want to thank Mr Sinneh and Dr Owiz Koroma and all other health workers for their

efforts. To my people at Upper Dwarzark, New England Ville and Sumaila Town, I want to say let us take heart and that all is not lost. We are going to survive.

**HON. ROSALINE J. SMITH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to join my colleagues in thanking this Honourable House for setting aside this special time to give tributes to all my compatriots who lost their lives. Indeed, my constituency is affected; i.e., the Kanikay Wharf, Lower Race Course and Kissy Brook. They lost properties and houses. It was however reported that only one life was lost in my constituency, but properties worth millions of Leones were destroyed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to offer condolences to the families of those Sierra Leoneans who lost their lives during this mudslide. Special condolence to my colleague from the Mountain Rural, Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah and Honourable Sheku Sannoh, who suffered the greatest consequences of this tragic event. It is indeed a loss to this nation. Sierra Leone is mourning. We want to appeal to people who are making mockery of this tragic event by sending naked photos of victims on social media to please cease forthwith. This is sad and nobody will want to see their family members being posted on social media naked. This is the time for us Sierra Leoneans to show solidarity and respect for fellow Sierra Leoneans. Let us love one another and respect one another. We have to stop the blame game. This is not the time for politicking at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our donor partners are sending moneys. According to the British Broadcasting Cooperation [BBC], the European Union is sending money and the reporter asked who these moneys will be going to? He said the moneys will be going to Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs] and International Non-Governmental Organisations [INGOs]. I want to inform the people that these moneys are going to the donors and not the Government of Sierra Leone. I want the people of this country to know that these moneys are not coming to the Government of Sierra Leone. These moneys are going to the donors. These moneys are not coming to Members of Parliament. The people of this country should be told about it. This is a crisis and when donors are sending moneys, people are quick to say Government should account for these moneys. These moneys are being sent to NGOs and I do not want people to

blame the Government. The figures you are hearing are not coming to the Government of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am appealing to all Sierra Leoneans to take whatever support directly to the victims. My constituents have lost properties. School going children have lost their school uniforms, books and other school materials. I am appealing, on their behalf, to support the needy. Send support to them. Thank you.

**HON. FODAY RADO YOKIE:** Naturally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I like talking, but not on this particular occasion. I speak with a very heavy heart. To me, people will say it occurs at the Mount Sugar Loaf, where Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah is representing; where the Honourable Sheku Sannoh is representing; and where the Honourable Rosaline J. Smith is representing. To me, this is a national disaster; and therefore, we have to approach it nationally. This is not the time for Politicking. This is not Politics time. As far as I am concerned, we are all affected either directly or indirectly. All of us could have lost a cousin, aunty, brother or friend. I want to appeal to all Sierra Leoneans, especially those of us who are using the social media. I am greatly disappointed at what I am seeing on social media. These are healthy people who went to bed and unfortunately, they found themselves in this unfortunate situation. You look at their predicament you take that picture and send it on WhatSapp is very sad. You are not sympathising; but rather you are provoking them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I speak with heavy heart whenever I see these pictures on social media. When I saw those pictures, I asked myself if we are sympathising or are we mocking the deceased? These are dead people and we have to give them their last respect. Let us respect the dead. Nobody wants to end that way. Let us stop politicising what is not politics. Very soon we are coming to politics. You are red and I am green. I tell you what you do good and support what is good for this nation. Again, this is not politics time. It is time for us to sympathise. We are in a national crisis and we have to be seen in that mood.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appeal to the Government that whatever is going to happen, let it have a national face. When it comes to committees, let us have

all sides represented, so that we can all put hands on deck and do the little we can do. Directly or indirectly, I may want to donate something to the people, but we have to respect Honourable Sheku Sannoh's committee to give him the necessary support. To me, the victims should be the direct beneficiaries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me deviate a little from what the Honourable Rosaline J. Smith said about moneys being given to INGOs and NGOs to do their job. It is our responsibility to oversee those NGOs and INGOs. They are working for the people of Sierra Leone. For instance, it is our responsibility to ensure that the moneys reach the beneficiaries. The messages are the same.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of myself and the people of Constituency 068, from Bo District, we do sympathise with all those who have lost their lives and property. May their souls rest in perfect peace.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me round up by saying that people should stop posting negative pictures on social media. We can post the good work of people, but we should not post naked photos of the dead on social media. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** We also have stories that are misinforming the public, particularly Members of Parliament are not sure of certain stories. We should not assist in disseminating them as Members of Parliament. We cannot criticise the public and be guilty of doing the same things. As Members of Parliament, we have to make sure that we are responsible.

**HON. ALHASSAN KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017 demonstrated the fury of natural disasters. It shows the fury of what people always trivialise; i.e., Mother Nature. What I personally want to say here is that we do not want a reoccurrence of what has already happened. We cannot control it, but we can control the level of destruction and devastation. Therefore, I am asking that we try to evacuate people living along those areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the display of pictures of dead bodies is not only morally wrong or despicable, but it is also a disgrace. That also calls for the control of social media. Social Media control is all over the world. In other countries, if you put anything that has to do with terrorism, whether you appraise their conduct or you talk anything in their favour, it is against the laws in the Western World and you will be trapped. Also, if people put anything on social media that is unpatriotic, they must answer questions and face the full force of the law. We can use social media to strengthen our democracy. We can also regulate social media for some of these vices that we are seeing now.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of my people in Constituency 096, Western Urban, I want to extend my deep felt condolences to the families for their loss. I also had some flooding in Pamoronko. I asked my people to take heart and let God bless Sierra Leone. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. MOHAMED KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. S.O 2 'In na li lah wa in na li lah ra ju,' which means that 'surely we all come from God and unto God shall we all return.' What happened on the 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 was unbelievable. Therefore, I want to say to the dead that 'may their souls rest in perfect peace.' To the widows, the widowers, the orphans, the homeless and everybody else, let them take heart. You are now all asking questions. Where am I going to live? Who is now going to pay the school fees? Who is going to feed me? You know what? I do not have the answers, but Allah has the answer. May God help us all.

**HON. DAUDA J. B. KALLON:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a nation, we are mourning and as individuals or family members, we are also mourning. As we mourn, let us have hope; hope that there is a God and the good God cares about us all and He will see us through. May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in perfect peace.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue of the media has been discussed extensively. I must state here that it is unheard off for the people of this country. This is only happening with us Sierra Leoneans. We are getting the feedback from our

people in the diaspora. Negative things are being posted on the social media about our country. Are we Sierra Leoneans? It would have been you or me. I do not think anyone of us would want to see any of our relatives, friends or family members being displayed on the social media in that disgraceful manner. Please let us take heart and let us tell those who are against this nation that this is Sierra Leone. The only Green, White and Blue that we are proud of. May God have mercy on those who are doing those evil things against our nation. Thank you.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my heart is broken for just two reasons. During this landslide and the floods, I have lost eighty-five constituents and three families unverified at that time. What broke my heart is the facts that out of the eighty-five people, none was recovered. All of them died at the heart of that Sugar Loaf. They were not seen anywhere. As we speak, the place is very deep and it is very difficult to find those people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to report here that one of the victims was held at the police cell. On Sunday, I did all I could to bail him out and I succeeded in doing that. When he went home, he died the same night. May their souls rest in peace. I am impressed by the response of my constituents, both at home and abroad. Their responses have been encouraging. I also want to thank them for their supports and the support from the Government. By the time I went there, the President and the Vice were there. This means that they were proactive and empathetic. They went there even earlier than I did. I thank you very much and God bless Sierra Leone.

**HON. THOMAS S. SENGEPOH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of Constituency 078 and the people of Bonthe Island, I wish to join His Excellency the President, the Government of Sierra Leone and this Honourable House to express my sincere and heartfelt condolences to the families of the disaster victims. I only wish to state at this point that in future, no more should we allow our disaster victims to be displayed like that. I think this nation has the capacity to provide body-bags. The way these victims were piled together or they were scattered all over the place showed no

respect to the memory of these deceased. I want to crave the indulgence of the Republic of Sierra Leone that in future, if anything of this sort takes place, let us go all out and provide body-bags for the dead. Let us go out to provide body-bags at least to hide their nakedness. Some of these victims were displayed naked and this was rather unfortunate. May their souls and all the souls of the faithful departed rest in perfect peace.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, it is unfortunate as all of you have said that Sierra Leoneans could behave the way they did. All those bodies were in body-bags. What happened was that those photographs were taken during the time when people were trying to identify their relatives. We cannot put them in body-bags during the identification period.

**HON. MOSES B. JORKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is rather unfortunate because I lost ten of my people. They were settling there. I pay visits to them after a day or two. I was called when the disaster happened. I travelled to the place and the Honourable Ibrahim Parteh Bah met me there. I spent over six hours there. As I speak, I do not think those bodies have been recovered. They are still there. I stand here with heavy heart that I have lost my people. May their souls rest in perfect peace.

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI [*Minority Leader of the House*]:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of this Parliament and the people of Sierra Leone, I want to extend my condolences to all of us for this disaster. I say to all of us because of those disaster areas where those families are coming from. I am sure no chiefdom, district or region was spared. Freetown is a melting pot because it is the capital city. I want to state here every ethnic group and region has been affected. That is why I said the loss is to everybody.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have had condolence messages from the Pan-African Parliament. The President of the Pan-African Parliament did send a condolence messages to the Speaker of this Parliament for the rest of the members of this country. We also received a condolence message from the Members of Parliament from Uganda,

Members of Parliament from Ethiopia and FAO because we work very closely with FAO in the Pan-African Parliament. So we want to register those condolences.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have lived in Kamayama for sixteen years. I came there in February, 2001. Sixteen years ago, the green belt, the beautiful mountains that we used to see in the morning and the forest along Kaningo River were intact, but within few years, they were replaced with houses. How the forest belt started disappearing is unknown to some of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have said in this Parliament over and over that we depend on the environment and that we are not happy the way things are going. We have the Committee on Works, Housing and Infrastructure in this House. I am sure we have spoken on how the environment is fast appearing and disappearing; and how settlements are appearing in places they should not appear because these places may be prone to weather conditions and other natural disasters.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, while we mourn those who have lost their lives, I agree with a lot of people who have spoken before me that we must now take action. It is going to be difficult to take some of those actions, but to prevent any future occurrence that could be more disastrous than this, we have to take action now. We as Sierra Leoneans have to come together and agree as a project in terms of implementing some or most of our environmental laws. We visited those places in the past two days. We hope that we will go back and reset the green belt in most of those areas. We encourage the Government to provide alternative land for the displaced people. We are getting information that the cracks at Mount Sugar Loaf and Gbangbayilla are deep and the rains have not yet ended. We have not even seen the seven days rain yet, if at all they are going to come.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are praying that the seven days rains do not come because it normally comes towards the end of August and early September. We pray that we do not have that because if we do, we do not know what is going to happen with those areas where the cracks have already been identified. At Regent, modalities have been put in place to start evacuating people within a certain radius.

Don Bosco has offered to take three hundred inmates for the next three months while Government is trying to find alternative settlement for those people. We saw a lot of assistance coming these past few days for our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are worried about the coordination. There must be a central command, so that we take account of the last penny and other assistance that are coming. We must make sure that the assistance benefits the victims. It must go to the victims. When we were giving our donation, we appealed that we must fully inform the victims, especially in the registration. This is because the registration is going on as we speak. We do not want people to come from other areas who were not affected to register and benefit because these things are likely to happen. If people are sending naked films of Sierra Leoneans, what other things they cannot do?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for those who are in those areas, especially Members of Parliament, Councillors and local authority, we must ensure that the coordinating team is set and that there is full accountability. I agree that the moneys that are coming to the NGOs are not coming to the Government. It is the Government at the end of the day that is asked to account for those monies. The NGOs should be accountable to the people of Sierra Leone. It is not their money and every cent sent through the NGOs must be accounted for. I will ask the parliamentary Committee on NGOs to ensure that proper account is given for every cent.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from what we have seen, I think we must start training our emergency rescue team and put them in place for any similar occurrence. In most countries that are prone to such disasters, they have trained emergency rescue teams, so that in the process, very little lives are lost as a result of rescue operations. We lack this in Sierra Leone. There are lot of things we need to do as a nation.

With those few words, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank everybody who has made his/her contributions. I also want to thank the Government and NGOs, both in Sierra Leone and outside Sierra Leone that are working to provide the enabling environment for us to deal with this catastrophe. May their souls rest in perfect peace and may God avert these accidents from us. I thank you very much.

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH** [*Majority Leader of the House and Leader of Government Business*]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like everybody has said here, these are very trying times for this nation. The Bible says, 'whilst we are in life we are in death.' That reminds us that constantly, we are facing death at any time. In fact, there is a school of thought that says what is most certain in the World is death that has to come. So, man is most certain about death at all times. Whilst we are certain about death, both the suddenness and the finality of death are the things that impact us very badly. We wake up in the morning hearty and hale, and you are not thinking that you are going to die on that day or any of your dependants. When death comes, the suddenness of it puts you off totally. Above all, the finality of death, you lose your loved one and you see him no more. It is not like saying goodbye to someone who is going on a trip and comes back in a week's time and the reunion starts again. The finality of death is that which we are grappling with.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we went to bed on Sunday night, we never imagined we will wake up on Monday morning and find out that a few hundreds of our compatriots are gone. On behalf of Government and the people of Sierra Leone, on behalf of this House, we want to send our condolences to the bereaved families. Like other speakers have said, no region has been spared. From the tributes we have heard, we have lost people from Kono District, Bonthe District and every other district is represented in the calamity. All we need to do is to console ourselves, and hope and pray that we will not have another recurrence of this sad situation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the extent of the calamity, like other speakers have said, can be reduced by the actions we will take. Two years ago, when there was such occurrence in Ghana, they did not wait at all. They implemented measures immediately to prevent another calamity. That is what every Honourable Member has called for, so that we can go into action and make sure that the extent of future calamity or future occurrences are reduced. We cannot afford to have such incident repeated in this country. Ebola came and we did not lose three or four hundred overnight as compared to the mudslide. Mr Speaker, about six hundred people are still unaccounted for. If they

were alive, they would have come forward to be counted again. The fact that they are still saying that they are unaccounted for speaks volumes. The Military acceptance of the phenomenon is that those people are 'missing in action.' Missing in action means you have died, but they do not know where exactly you died and they cannot account for your body. That does not give us some comfort at all. The problem we have to grapple with now should not be politicised. We should make sure that those places are vacated and people be relocated elsewhere. We hope that in future when they say that this is a no go area, people will not joke and will not go to those places any longer.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we have seen, the blame game has started. But like everybody has said, this is not a time for blame-games. We should put our shoulders to the wheel and make sure that we take care of the dead. It is unfortunate that people are joking. Even in reading the news, people at times you hear that 'we are not going to repeat these phrase because it will cause some havoc to those who cannot withstand it.' It is much more pathetic to have displayed the pictures of those people on WhatSapp. We were told that there are those people who are now selling the pictures on the streets. Those are people who should be arrested immediately. There is no criminality much more serious than that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, while we send condolences to the bereaved families, we pray that God give them consolations and continue to provide for them. We also pray that this type of incident will not repeat in this country. We wish them well and we hope that they will take heart and continue to pray to God. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, there is a suggestion for a Motion against those who are selling and/or parading the pictures not just on the streets, but on social media.

**HON. LEONARD S. FOFANAH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that anybody caught selling, parading or displaying those pictures of the mudslide and flood victims in any way, shape or form be arrested by the Police.

**HON. HELEN KUYEMBEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this is for the general public. I do not want a situation wherein the public will blame us for the laws we pass in this House. Let the public be warned that people transferring those pictures from your phone will also fall under the ambits of this law.

**THE SPEAKER:** If it is sent to your phone, you have to delete it. You should not forward it to another person or forum. The moment you forward it, you have participated in the process. Any seconder to that Motion?

**HON. DR BERNADETTE LAHAI [*Minority Leader*]:** I second the Motion.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[The Motion of Tribute by Honourable Members of Parliament to the memory of our compatriots who have been called to eternity by God Almighty following the flood and mudslide disaster on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> August, 2017 has been carried].*

**THE SPEAKER:** Where are the reporters from the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation? I want them to make sure that they report what Members of Parliament have just concluded today. Whoever gets the pictures, the person should delete them because if they participate in the process and the Police arrest them, they will be charged to Court.

Honourable Members, I want to thank you very much for your contributions and participation. Everybody wanted to contribute, but because of time it is impossible for everyone to do so. On behalf of the Speaker who is unavoidably absent as he is out of the Jurisdiction and myself, I will also want to join all of you in the tribute that has been paid. I also want to mention specifically the name of one of the Clerks of Committees in this House Mr Osman Kokofele for his efforts. I saw him in action and he has been very proactive. He was in the front line; and like all other front line fighters; i.e., the Military and the youths; he was there in his own protective gears to participate in the process. He also lost relatives and he had participated in the process for hours before he realised that his caretaker and his family had died. He was there as a citizen, giving his own service to humanity.

Honourable Members, there is also a suggestion at this point that this Parliament do inspection of the disaster scenes. If it is acceptable, we are going to start tomorrow with Lumley and then move to Regent Village. Considering the terrain, it will be very difficult to use the bus. I will suggest that we meet at Lumley. There is a suggestion by an Honourable Member that we meet at the Lumley Hospital at 10 a.m.

### ***ADJOURNMENT***

*[The House rose at 1.32 p.m., and was adjourned to Tuesday, 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2017]*