



**PARLIAMENTARY QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE
[PQAC] REPORT**

ON

**MEETING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURAL NEEDS AT THE
PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE, FREETOWN**

A PROJECT FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION [EU]

AND IMPLEMENTED

BY

**THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES
[UNOPS]**

SUBMITTED BY:

ABDUL RAHMAN N'JAI

1. LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BoQ	Bills of Quantities
CoP	Clerk of Parliament
CSPS	Center for Strategy and Parliamentary Studies
DG	Director General
EC	European Commission
EDSA	Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority
EGTC	Electricity Generation and Transmission Company
EU	European Union
FCC	Freetown City Council
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
HoP	House of Parliament
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MPs	Members of Parliament
PoSL	Parliament of Sierra Leone
PQAC	Parliamentary Quality Assurance Committee
PS	Parliamentary Service
PSC	Parliamentary Service Commission
PTC	Parliamentary Technical Committee
ToR	Terms of References
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
vfm	Value for Money

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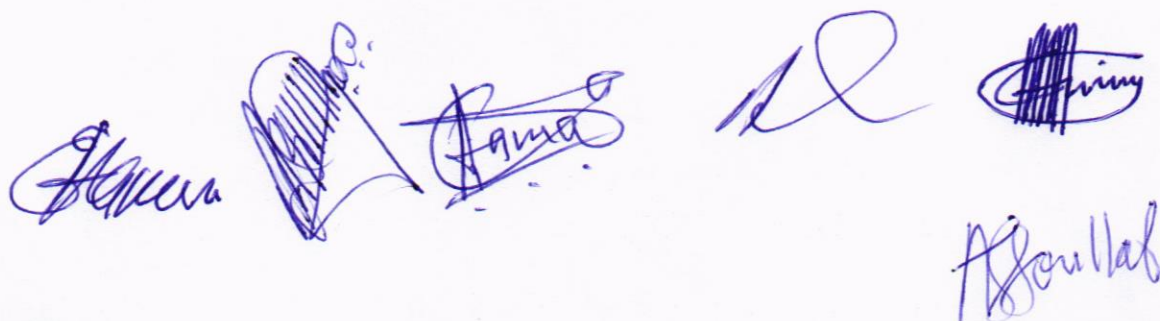
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentary Quality Assurance Committee (PQAC) was established by the Clerk of Parliament (CoP) in July, 2022 [following the adoption of a Motion by Members of Parliament where they expressed dissatisfaction over poor implementation of the project – Meeting Critical Infrastructural Needs of Parliament of Sierra Leone (PoSL)], with the mandate to assess the quality of the work of the United Nations Office for Project Services [UNOPS] in all material respect, including the refurbishment of Parliament among others and accordingly report on the Committee's findings.

The Committee had its first meeting on the 3rd August, 2022 where it mapped out a strategic direction on how the investigation process would look like. At that meeting and with its mandate, the Committee, as one of its responsibilities, agreed on several actions. Among the actions was the one to write to UNOPS through the Project Board Chair for the submission of the project documents, especially the Bills of Quantities [BoQs] before the commencement of the exercise. A Letter was then written to UNOPS, copying all stakeholders, requesting for BoQs and all other related documents that would aid the Committee carryout the task within the stipulated timeframe, but there was no response to the request and that delayed the work of the Committee.

The Committee held several meetings thereafter, including project site visitations, interviews with key stakeholders. Those meetings provided the platform upon which certain decisions that informed the course of the investigation were taken.

In totality, the investigation covered thirteen [13] components of the Project that were funded by the EU and implemented by UNOPS. It is the view of the Committee that this report would provide the most invaluable information for the Parliamentary Leadership, Members of Parliament (MPs), Parliamentary Staff, the General Public, the Donor and the Project Implementers.

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2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Located on the hill top of Tower Hill, OAU Drive, Freetown [overlooking the capital city], the Sierra Leone House of Parliament (HoP) is the Legislative Arm of the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and was inaugurated in 1961 as House of Representatives; and since that period, it had never been renovated until 2004, when a Chinese Company was contracted to renovate same by the GoSL after forty-three [43] years in existence.

In 2016, the European Commission [EC] agreed to provide Twenty-Seven Million Euros [EUR 27,000,000] to support the governance sector in Sierra Leone and Parliament was to benefit Three Million Euros [EUR 3,000,000] from that amount. A Committee [on the European Union Parliamentary Project] was constituted by the Leadership of the Forth Parliament [which comprised of MPs, Management and Staff of Parliament], stated in one of their recommendations that the Three Million Euros was too huge for the rehabilitation of the Main Legislative Building and thus recommended that the amount be used to construct one hundred and fifty [150] offices for MPs, three hundred [300] seater multipurpose conference hall and twenty [20] special offices for the Leadership.

The EU came to the Leadership [after the feedback from Parliament], and informed same that in their assessment, the Three Million Euros would not be enough to meet the listed needs. The erstwhile Leadership was however of different view, which was in disagreement with that of the EU and there was a standoff between both parties, and the Project was temporarily abandoned. After several deliberations when the process was resuscitated, the erstwhile Leadership of Parliament acceded, but on the condition that the whole structure of the Main Legislative Building is properly roofed, so as to put to rest the persistent leakage that had engulfed same every rainy season. The EU agreed, but the implementation process was suspended until after the general elections in 2018.



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3. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COMMITTEE

The PQAC was established by the CoP and approved by the Rt. Honourable Speaker of Parliament, following the adoption of a Motion by MPs [where they expressed frustration over the use of substandard materials and poor works done by engineers contracted by **UNOPS**, to investigate whether the Project Implementers complied with the terms and conditions of the Project and value for money [vfm] is attained in terms of meeting the desired result.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

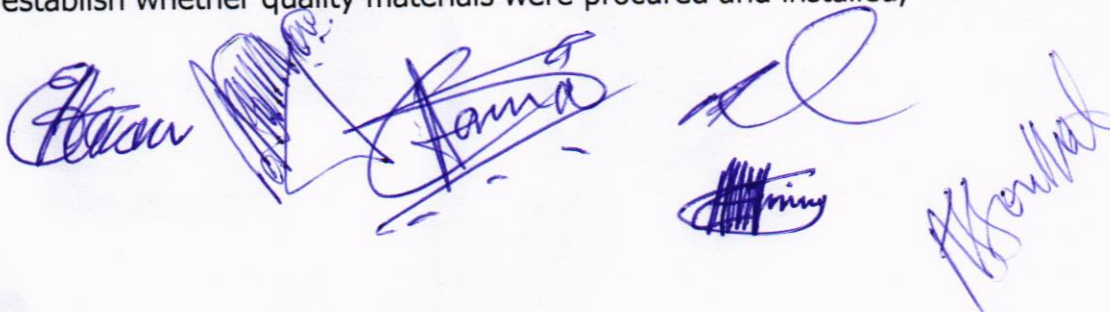
As stated in the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR), the Committee was constituted to find out whether the Project Implementers observed the Project terms and conditions and to also determine whether vfm is attained by examining the quality of works done and the quality of materials used. Other responsibilities of the Committee [as indicated in its ToR] are:

- ❖ Follow upon on project implementation of approved BoQs with the contractors to ensure compliance to standards and signed contracts;
- ❖ Conduct inspection of rehabilitation works, materials and equipment installed;
- ❖ Assist the Project Board through assessment of identified critical infrastructure in selected location and develop a work plan with estimated cost; and
- ❖ Any other duties as may be assigned by the Project Board Chair.

5. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EXERCISE

The main aim of the exercise was to find out whether vfm is attained by looking at the quality of workmanship and of the materials used to meet the desired output. The specific objectives are:

- ❖ to ascertain whether the Project Implementers complied with the Project terms and conditions;
- ❖ to examine the quality of work done and determine whether vfm is realised;
- ❖ to establish whether quality materials were procured and installed;

The bottom of the page features several handwritten signatures in blue ink. From left to right, there are approximately six distinct signatures, some of which are heavily scribbled or stylized. The signatures appear to be in various colors and styles, including blue and black ink.

- ❖ to bring to light the challenges encountered by the Project Implementers in the course of executing same;
- ❖ to identify the gaps and provide solid recommendations;
- ❖ to find out whether the awards of the Project Contract to UNOPS and contracts to contractors were done in accordance with the required laws or procedures; and
- ❖ to discover the extent to which UNOPS [the Lead for the Project implementation], adhered to procurement regulations and the tax laws of Sierra Leone.

6. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

The following constitute the membership of the Committee and a Secretary:

N'Jai, Abdul Rahman	Chairman
Sannoh, Abdulai B	Member
Conteh, Mamusu Fatima	Member
Kamara, Anthony C	Member
Kamara, Alie	Member
Foullah, Musa L A	Secretary

7. SCOPE OF THE EXERCISE

The exercise lasted for months [from August, 2022 to March, 2023] and covered the following components of the Project:

- i. Construction of the Walkway/Ram;
- ii. Installation of Two Passengers Lifts;
- iii. Construction of a Water Reservoir and a Pump Room;
- iv. Construction of a Police Security Post;
- v. Electrification of the Main Building – 500 KVA Generator and PV Solar;
- vi. Firefighting System;
- vii. Project Vehicle [Toyota Hilux];
- viii. Plumbing, Tiling, Ceiling, Electricals and Sewage System;
- ix. Addressing the Leakages;

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Alie

Mamusu

Anthony C Kamara

- x. Expansion of the Leadership Offices, Provision of additional Toilet Facilities, and the Renovation of Staff Offices and Public Toilets;
- xi. Maintenance of Three [3] Main Entrance and Sixteen [16] Exit Doors;
- xii. Construction of parliamentary stores and offices for CSPS
- xiii. ICT Infrastructure.

8. METHODOLOGY

The exercise comprised a review of the Project documents, reports, including letters and memos, Minutes of Meetings and Mails showing evidence of communication and other relevant documents. Besides, the Committee visited Project sites with PoSL technical staff to physically verify the quality of materials used and the quality of work done. The Committee further conducted interviews with the Honourable Speaker of Parliament, the CoP, Project Board Chairman, Director General (DG), Director of Internal Controls and Compliance (ICC), Director of ICT and team, Director of Sergeant-At-Arms, Facility Supervisor and team, aiming at gaining insights into how the Project was awarded and eventually implemented. In this respect, the review of documents and explanations from interviewees gave this Committee a better understanding of the issues and directed further investigations to specific areas of concern.

Again, to ensure fairness and in compliance with the principle of audi alteram partem, the Committee met with Ing. Trudy Morgan for some clarifications on issues raised by Parliamentary Facility and Technical Teams and to hear her (Ing Trudy Morgan) own part, especially on the quality of materials used and the expected results.

9. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are summaries of the Committee's general findings and recommendations:

a. Parliament's Involvement in the Award and Implementation of the Project

Interviews conducted and documents reviewed revealed that:



- ❖ The EU Delegation awarded the Project Contract to UNOPS after obtaining a '**No Objection**' from PoSL, informing the Leadership of Parliament that the grant was about to lapse unless utilised immediately. Consequently, the EU Delegation awarded the Contract to UNOPS without following the due procurement process in accordance with the Procurement Laws of Sierra Leone.

In view of the above and in consideration of the fact that EU could have their own procedures relating to the award of Projects/Contracts, the Committee is of the view that in future, the country's procurement laws and even donor regulations be strictly adhered to so that a contractual relationship between the Beneficiary and the Project Implementer[s] is clearly established.

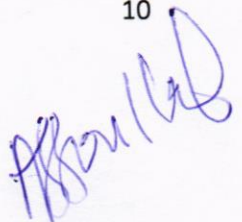
b. Governance of the Project

A Project Board [consisting of the CoP as Chair, Ing. Trudy Morgan as Secretary, representatives from all Political Parties and Paramount Chiefs], was established to provide strategic direction, guidance and management of the Project through review and approval of changes to initial plans, priorities, deliverables and schedules.

The Committee observed from the review of Project Board Minutes and interviews conducted with Ing. Trudy Morgan [UNOPS' Project Manager], that the Project Board made certain changes to the original plans, deliverables and priority areas, such as the provision of ten Desktop Computers [instead of the approved sixty]; Lenovo Tablets [instead of Apple Brand (iPad) suggested by the ICT Director]; not including the Lithium Energy Storage System [Solar Battery] and also dropping the construction of another facility to host the other PV Solar, provision of Lifts and the reinstallation of half of the old aluminum zinc. However, the Committee noted that the decision to terminate the contracts with BDEV and subsequently awarded to other contractors was not taken by the Project Board, but by UNOPS after consultations with EU. The Committee was with the opinion that the issue should have been discussed first at Project Board meetings, given the critical nature of same.

Contingent upon the above, the Committee is of the view that in future, every decision is sanctioned by the established Project Board; and that the





decision to not include the second PV Solar and the Lithium Energy Storage System [Solar Battery] be reconsidered by the Project Board because it will help to store excess electricity that can be used in the event Solar Panels cannot generate enough energy, especially at night and during the rainy seasons when the supply of sunshine is not always constant.

c. Bills of Quantities [BoQs]

The BoQs is simply a detailed statement of work, prices, dimensions and other important details in the construction industry. Wikipedia defines BoQs as a document used in the construction engineering wherein materials, labour and their costs are itemised. The Committee however noted from the review of documents that:

- ❖ the BoQs were without costs or prices attached; and as a result, the Committee was unable to ascertain the cost of materials and labour; and
- ❖ in some instances, the contractors were asked to cost materials, a situation the Committee noted as not only an aberration to normal construction practice, but the possibility for overpricing. An example here also, was when Mr. Joseph Conteh, the ICT Director was directed to do costing for an amount of **€500,000** for ICT needs.

Based on the foregoing, the Committee is of the view that comprehensive BoQs are submitted to the newly established Parliamentary Technical Committee (PTC) for further consideration; and in future, contractors should not be asked to provide costs of materials, so as to avoid conflicts of interest, which could eventually lead to overpricing.

d. Provision of Additional Facilities

From the interviews conducted and sites visited, the Committee found that some alterations were made by the Project Board, which resulted in the provision of additional facilities, such as the installation of Lifts for people with disabilities, walkway/ram linking the Main Legislative and the Administrative Buildings, Water Reservoir, 500KVA Generator, PV Solar, Police Post, Stores, offices for the Centre for Strategy and Parliamentary Studies [CSPS], expansion of Leadership Offices with additional toilet facilities, etc.



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Whilst commending the Project Board and UNOPS for these adjustments, the Committee however expressed grave concern over poor workmanship and the use of substandard materials in these facilities, especially the wooden plank installed on the walkway and its size, fittings and fixtures, glass and therefore recommends that those materials are replaced with better quality materials and the size of the walkway increased to prevent water from splashing on users when it rains.

e. Ongoing Works

Project sites visited and interviews conducted with sites engineers revealed that the contracts for the installation of pipes and other equipment at the Pump Room, installation of solar gadgets, Lifts, etc. are still ongoing; and recently UNOPS has awarded contracts to address the defects caused by poor work and substandard materials earlier used, especially those relating to plumbing, leakage, ceiling, fittings and fixtures, etc.

In view of the above, the Committee recommends that UNOPS exercises urgency and ensure that the various aspects of the Project are completed without further delay; and the PTC [through their professional advice] ensures that quality materials are used and quality works are carried out.

f. Relationship between UNOPS and Parliament's Facility Teams

Under normal circumstances, it is expected that a healthy work relationship between the resident technical teams and the project implementers is cultivated and nurtured for proper execution of specific tasks. The Committee however realised from interviews conducted that this ideal situation was not achieved due to reasons best known to both parties. This created embarrassing situations wherein Parliament's Facility Teams are not opportune to know how the water pipes and electrical cables were run; and in the event there is a glitch somewhere within the building, it would be very difficult to swiftly address the problem by Parliament Facility Teams.

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Based on the foregoing and in consideration of the fact that the Facility

Teams would have to take over the maintenance aspects of these facilities,

the Committee considers the following as critical:

- ❖ The Office of the COP and that of the DG should ensure that the various maintenance teams cooperate with UNOPS/sites engineers, so that they familiarise themselves with happenings at the various sites; and

❖ UNOPS to provide trainings for all Facility Teams on the maintenance aspect of these facilities, such as the pipes and equipment at the Pump

Room Station, the Lifts, PV Solar, etc.

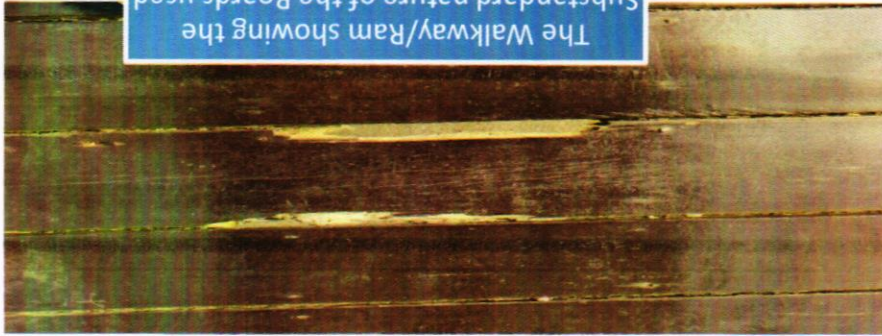
B. SPECIFIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) CONSTRUCTION OF THE WALKWAY/RAM LINKING THE TWO BUILDINGS

The walkway/ram links the Main Legislative Building to the Administrative building. This is one of the innovative areas of the Project because pedestrians are expected to be protected from the scorches of the sun or rains when trying to access any of the buildings from the other end. During the investigation process, however, the Committee

noted the following:

- ❖ I-beam steels were of higher quality, and both the steels and wooden plank were perfectly installed. However, the Committee considered the walkway as a death trap due to the low quality of boards used and some of them have sustained serious cracks that could lead to horrible accident, if nothing is done in the not-too-distant future. See photo below:



The Walkway/Ram showing the Substandard nature of the Boards used

❖ the Committee also considered the walkway to be too narrow for the purpose with

no water prevention guards to prevent water from splashing on pedestrians when it rains. Consequently, the boards get slippery, making very difficult and too risky for

users. See photo below:



In view of the above, the Committee recommends the following:

- ❖ the walkway facility should be temporarily put out of use until the wooden plank is replaced with concrete slab; and
- ❖ the way sides of the walkway [from the plank to the roof of both sides] are enclosed with glass or any other transparent material, thereby creating a corridor that will prevent rainwater from splashing on pedestrians whenever it rains.

(!!!) INSTALLATION OF TWO PASSENGERS LIFTS

Interviews conducted and sites visited revealed that the two pits for the installation of passengers' lifts had been dug and the installation process has started. Thus, the Committee constrained to give further comments on them. As indicated in the photograph below, installation of the Main Entrance Lift is now in advanced stage. See photo below:

