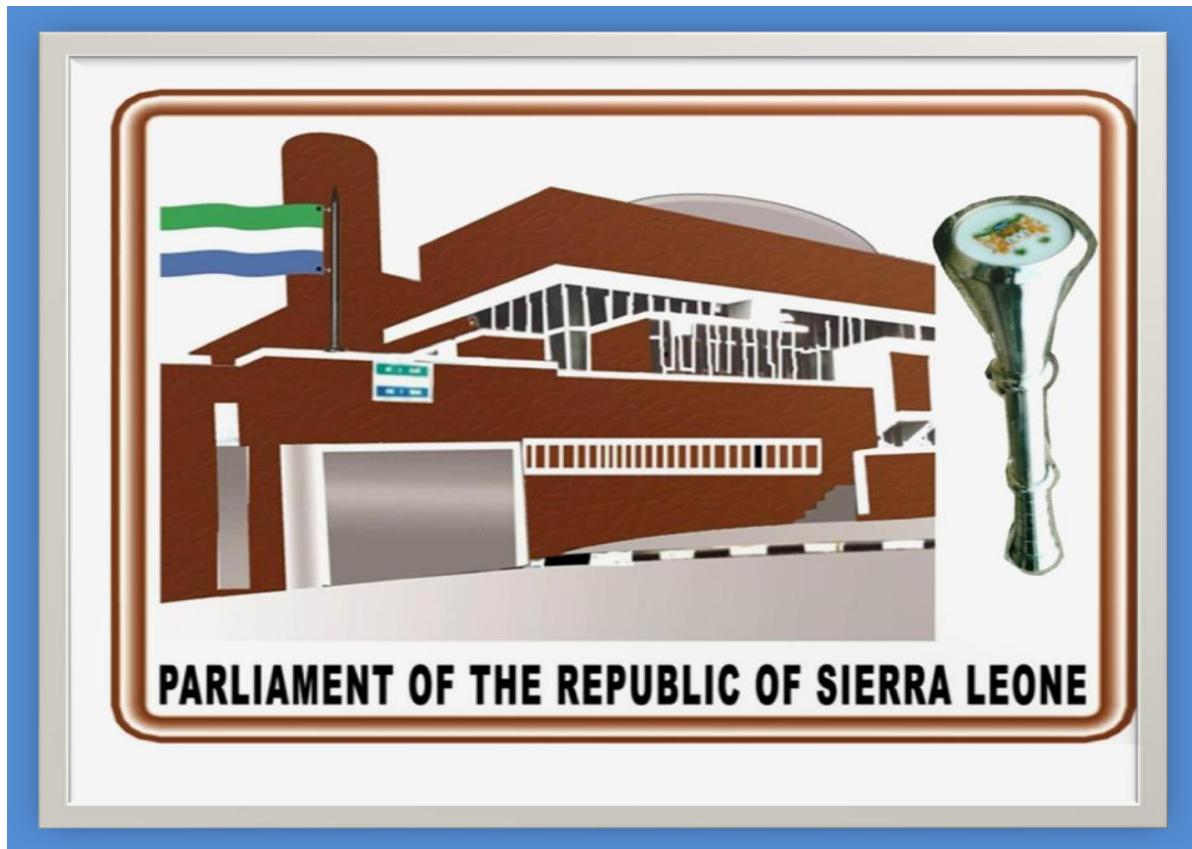


*Posl/Dept/Hansard/Vol.1, No.5/15/10/24*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

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**[HANSARD]**

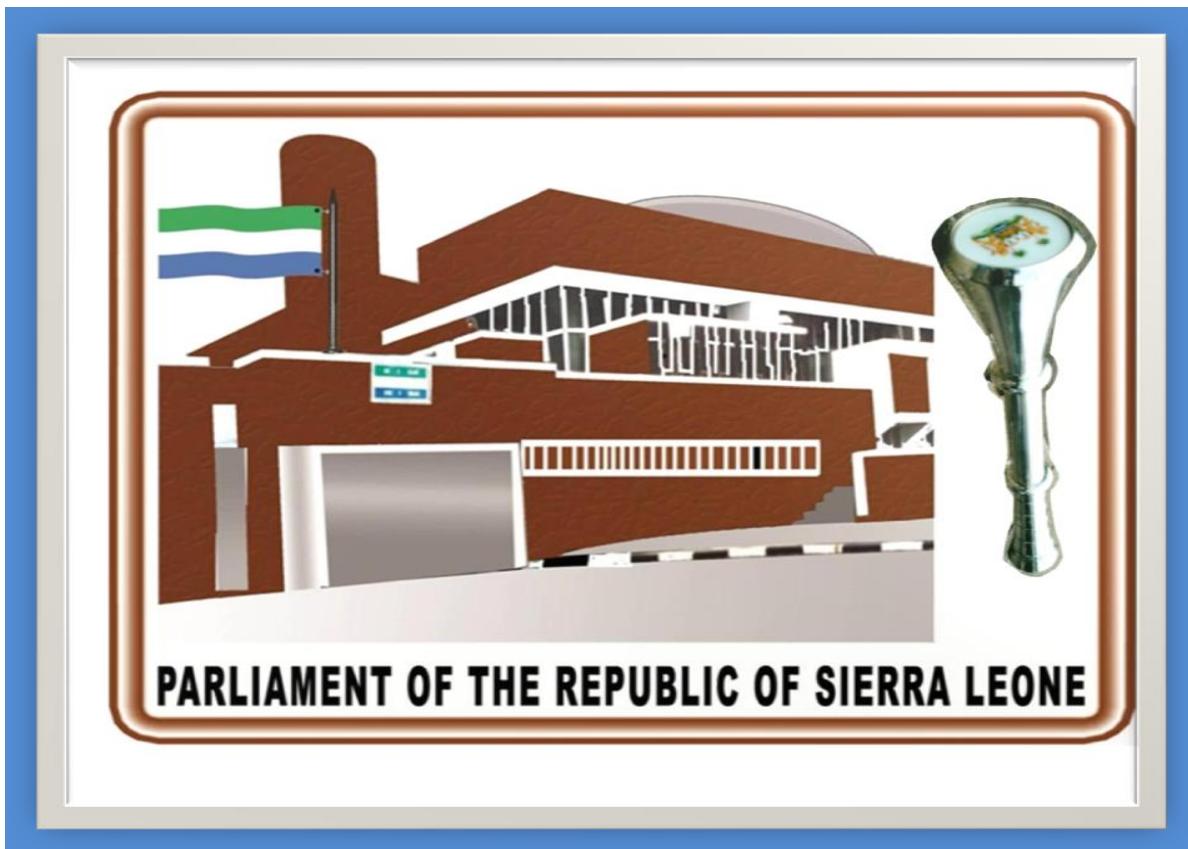
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING**

**TUESDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2024**

*SESSION – 2024/2025*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: I**

**NUMBER: 5**

First Meeting of the First Session of the Sixth Parliament  
of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone.

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

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*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE*

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

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**FIRST SESSION – FIRST MEETING  
OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT  
OF THE SECOND REPUBLIC**

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**Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.**

**I. PRAYERS**

*[The Deputy Clerk, Gilbert Bosco Nabay, Read the Prayers]*

*[The House met at 10:15a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]*

*[The Speaker, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of S.O 5[2]*

**HON. BASHIRU SIDIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I move that we amend the Order Paper to read:

**I. PRAYERS;**

**II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2024;**

**III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER;**

**IV. LAYING OF PAPERS**

[A] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[ B] THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION

- THE AIRLINE OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN AIR SIERRA LEONE LIMITED AND THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION, REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE.

Mr Speaker, on that note, I so move

**THE SPEAKER:** Any Seconder?

**HON. MAADA LEBBIE:** I So second, Mr Speaker

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The Motion to amend the Order Paper moved by the Acting Leader of Government Business has been carried]*

**II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR FRIDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2024**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, as usual, we shall begin with the Record of Votes and Proceedings. Pages 1 to 4? , Page 5? Page 6?, Page 7?, Page 8?, Page 9?, Page 10? Can a Member please move?

**HON. BRIMA MANSARAY:** I so move, Mr Speaker

Speaker: Any seconder

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** I so second, Mr Speaker

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The Record of Votes and Proceedings for Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2024 has been adopted]*

### **III. PAPERS LAID**

#### **[A] THE MINISTER OF FINANCE**

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE-** *[Sheku Fantamadi Bangura]*: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the following papers:

1. THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE COMPACT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.
2. THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

#### **[B] THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION**

**THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with your leave, I beg to lay on the Table of this Honorable House the following paper:

- AIRLINE OPERATING AGREEMENT BETWEEN AIR SIERRA LEONE LIMITED AND THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION, REPRESENTING THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, this sitting is stood down for 10 Minutes.

*[The House stood down at 10:25 am and resumed at 10:37am]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, can you please approach me? [the Leader of the Opposition approached Mr Speaker] Acting Leader of Government Business, proceed with the next item.

**HON BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I beg to further amend the Order Paper. Under the heading **Bill**, the Child Right Act which is [v] on the Order Paper now becomes [vi], and the **Government Motion**; the Minister of Finance which is [vi] now becomes [v]. I so Move, Mr Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS- LAMIN:** I so Second, Mr Speaker

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The motion to further amend the Order Paper moveed by the Acting Leader of Government Business has been carried]*

## **V. GOVERNMENT MOTION**

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE-** [Sheku Fantamadi Bangura]: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on the 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024:

1. THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE, COMPACT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2. THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Power Compact and the Program of Implementation Agreement form the program documents for the **\$480MIn** grant fund to increase the availability of affordable and reliable electricity supply to the households, businesses and social institutions in Sierra Leone. Once ratified by this Honorable House of Parliament, the Compact Agreement will have the status of an international treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, the Compact Agreement describes three major projects which include:

[i.] *THE TRANSMISSION BACKBONE PROJECT:* This project seeks to expand and improve the reliability of transmission backbone of the power systems in the Republic of Sierra Leone by constructing the two **25 KV** Southern Transmission Line and accompanying substations, construction of a main and backup dispatch centers for both transmission and distribution, upgrade of existing **161 KV** line and new substations in Makeni and Lunsar, and Capacity building for the Electricity Generation and Transmission Company [EGTC] to manage new assets with a focus on transmission capacity.

[ii.] *THE DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESS PROJECT:* Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this project aims to increase the reliable delivery and consumption of electricity across Sierra Leone. It will also include both the distribution line and densification activities in the Western Area and other towns that will be defined once the access refinement study is complete during the mobilization phase

[iii.] *THE POWER SECTOR REFORM PROJECT:* This project will build on the gains of the successfully completed MCC threshold program by deepening the sector reforms from capacity building, governance corporate improvements across the Ministry of Energy, the power utilities and the regulator. And furthermore, this component of the project will support the creation of an enabling environment for private sector investments in the energy sector, including the development of pipeline generation projects that are bankable and have access to new insurance products to attract private investments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, both the Compact and the Implementation Agreements also cover the following:

Funding and resources as applied during different stages of the mobilization and implementation phase of the Compact, conditions precedent to entry into force and subsequent disbursements, governance of the program, including the establishment of the Board and the Management Unit, the Tax implications guided by the general tax exemption status of the grant funding, and the government of Sierra Leone's own contribution to the Compact, namely, a **\$14.2 Mln** commitment through the Indian EXIM Bank line of credit to complete the construction of the Newton substation as part of the Northern Transmission Line Project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is important to also give context to the strategic relevance and urgency of this intervention in the Republic of Sierra Leone. Our medium term National Development Plan identifies infrastructure, technology and innovation as one of the big five game changers. And according to this plan, by 2030 our generation capacity for power in the country should increase from less than **250** Megawatts currently, to over a **1000** Megawatts. That will increase access to electricity in this country from **36%** currently, which we had increased from **16%** in 2017 to **60%** by the time of 2030.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this MCC compact is a major contributor to the achievement of the key objective of the Medium Term Development Plan. An investment in transmission backbone on the dispatch capacity will significantly improve the efficiency of the energy systems, but also allow more power to be delivered through across the country. By strengthening the distribution systems in the country, and expanding into new areas, a greater number of the population will have access to power and in cities like Freetown, but also in other major cities. One other critical component will be to support the Feed Salon Program in ensuring that power reaches each of those six ecological areas that have been identified. The investment will handle serious bottlenecks in the systems that we are currently faced with, such as overloading of our transformers, which will improve the reliability of our power supply.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the investment in addition to those by the government and development partners, are expected to improve the financial viability of EDSA, increase the capacity of EDSA as well to offtake more power and deliver that power efficiently to our customers, thereby allowing us in achieving these objectives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, given the current status of crisis or strings in the energy sector, many of the proposed interventions to improve sector performance through governance reforms, such as addressing EDSA arrears, establishing Independent Collection Accounts, are expected to support this compact funding. To this end, swift implementation of the Compact activities are inextricably linked to addressing the current energy crisis in the country and leveraging on other channels of funding such as Power Africa, DFC and other partners as well.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must also share with you some of the expected benefits and key beneficiaries. I have alluded to this as well, but the cost benefit analysis reveals that **4.6** million Sierra Leoneans across the country will benefit from compact investment by having increased access to affordable and reliable Electricity in different locations. The Compact has good geographical spread as I earlier noted, with major investment anticipated in the Western Area, Northern Region, Northwest Region, and in the Southern Region of the country. An increased availability of reliable power will also impact current and new private investments in the country to access reliable power across different sectors, and easing barriers to our businesses, Banks and other entities in the government.

Mr Speaker, the Compact is going to be a tangible investment, and we believe it is going to impact on the intended results. And the compact was informed by, I must say, two years diagnostic analysis that was done on the sector and this constraint analysis was undertaken on the entire economy. And after several rigorous diagnoses, it was deemed that the most binding countries constrained to our development and our growth as an economy is the weakness in the power sector. And the evidences have

been very formidable and hence the directives of His Excellency that the Power Sector be the sole sector to invest this grant money.

With these few remarks, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the House hereby ratifies the Following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024:

1. THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE COMPACT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

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

*[QUESTION PROPOSED]*

**THE SPEAKER:** So nobody is interested in debating today? I have just got a list from the Leader of the Opposition. Acting Leader of Government Business, can you give me a list? Okay, so I can just take the five Members that are standing? Okay, thank you. Let me start with Honorable Rogers. So the five Members are; Honourable Rogers, Honourable Engineer Bala, Honourable Lamin, Honourable yei Kamara and Honourable Gevao. Yes Honourable, proceed.

*Suspension of S.O5 [2]*

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Sorry Honourable Member. Mr Speaker, can you please add Honourable Simeon on that list.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, noted. Proceed, Honourable Rogers.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I rise to add my voice to this very important and historic Agreement. Let me start by asserting that indeed, this Agreement is very compelling for ratification it does not even need ten minutes to be debated. I describe these Agreements as the life wire of this country. Only enemies would attempt not to... *[Interrupted]* no, I am just saying it.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, please allow him to debate.

**HON. ALEX M. ROGERS:** Honourable Members, it has to do with semantics, so I am comfortable in using that word, Mr Speaker, and I have no regret for that. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these two Agreements are indeed very much compelling within the context of development and growth in this country. Mind you, we are talking about sustainable energy, and with these Agreements, I believe that accessibility to electricity will be enhanced across the country. Remember, recently we started with Rural Electrification and along the line we encountered some hitches. But with these Agreements, I want to believe that increased energy reliability and distribution will be promoted, and investment within the context of growth will also be enhanced. So with that few remarks, I want to call on my colleagues from both aisle not to waste time to ratify these Agreements, I thank you all.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Alex Rogers. Honourable Ibrahim Barrie, you have the Floor.

**HON. IBRAHIM BARRIE:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, the **\$480MIn** MCC compact presents an unprecedented opportunity for Sierra Leone, particularly in the energy and infrastructure sectors. But not just in the Energy sector, it also provides an opportunity to improve our governance system and enhance democracy within our country based on the conditions attached to it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me use this opportunity to thank the US government for always pushing developing countries through this compact to enhance their democracy, ensure that elections are credible, ensure that electoral institutions are independent, and ensure that the voice of every citizen of a country is heard through an independent, fair and credible process of electioneering.

Mr Speaker, I want to draw the attention of this House to the preconditions for strengthening democracy as ascribed in this Agreement. Mr Speaker, the conditions tied to this compact are not just technical fixes; they are foundational steps to consolidate

our democracy, ensure independence for our electoral commission, and create a system where credible elections can be held, aligned with international best practice. Mr Speaker, these reforms are essential for ensuring that the will of the people is respected in every election, free from manipulation and undue influence.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us not forget that the sacrifices made for the democracy we have today are enormous; thousands of brave Sierra Leoneans, including our soldiers paid the ultimate price for the freedom we enjoy today. We must ask ourselves whether we are willing to let these sacrifices go in vain.

Mr Speaker, the manipulations and challenges surrounding the 2023 elections serve as a painful reminder that our democracy is fragile. I repeat; Mr Speaker, the manipulations and challenges surrounding the 2023 elections serve as a painful reminder that our democracy is fragile. The people's votes, Mr Speaker, must never be tampered with. The essence of our democracy depends on free, fair and credible election. Mr Speaker no one, whether is government or opposition, has the right to undermine this democracy. And as a result of that, we want to thank the US government for ensuring that key conditions for this compact... *[Interrupted]*

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order, **S.O 34**

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I am not sure we are debating elections here this morning; we are talking about the MCC and there is nothing about elections in this MCC. So, Mr Speaker, can we please stick to the Agreements? If we want to talk about election let us start from 2007.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright, it is alright. Yes Leader of the Opposition

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, let me just make some corrections to the point of Order. If my Honourable Chief Whip can refer to the publication made on the...  
*[Interruption]*

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Honourable Member let me end please.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Hold on, Honourable Member, Mr Speaker is the arbiter of this House.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Yes, he has given me the nod to go ahead.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on. Both of you are Leaders and should understand the rules.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Yes sir, exactly.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Do not debate the Point of Order, allow the Speaker to rule on that, please.

**HON ABDUL KARGBO:** He has given me the nod. So I just want to do a short correction.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Please allow the Speaker to rule.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** He has given me the nod. He gave a Point of Order and I am reacting to his Point of Order.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of Government Business, this is your document, right? Let us try to be a little tolerant today because this is your document.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Yes, exactly.

**THE SPEAKER:** So let me hear you

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, I just want to refer the Chief Whip of this House to a document published by the United States Government on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September, 2024. The document, in Paragraph four says; *'Sierra Leone's eligibility for the compact remains highly dependent on the country's sustained commitment to advancing democracy, combating corruption and investing in its people. Sierra Leone will need to*

*continue to meet eligibility benchmark in these areas throughout the life of the Compact, including the full and expeditious implementation of both the Agreement of National Unity and the joint recommendations of the Tripartite Committee, cooperation between the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party and the opposition APC party'.*

So Mr Speaker, this document is highly contingent on the recommendations of the Tripartite Agreement which was born out of the problems in the 2023 elections.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. Leader of Government Business, can I hear you on this?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, can we continue the debate, please?

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, Honourable Members, can you hear me out? Honourable Members, I want you to help me today. I really want you to help me by not allowing this House to go political today. I am pleading with you, because as far as I know, the Compact is good for the rest of Sierra Leone.

I would have wholeheartedly supported an APC Government to achieve this. I would have done that because this is good for all of us, please. It is my plea, even as I sit here, is my plea that we do not allow politics to seep into our debate today. Do not forget that we would have the HANSARD eventually. We do not want researchers to come to Parliament and read our HANSARD and see that some Sierra Leoneans were against the Compact, or some Sierra Leoneans tended to argue in a way that could be construed as against awarding the Compact. So it is my plea that we do not go political today. Let us in our debate express our gratitude to the United States Government for giving us this opportunity, and we express our gratitude to those who went all out to ensure that this particular Compact is won. I have not given any indication that anybody here on my left has gone political. I am just pleading; I know both sides have not gone political. I am just pleading that we do not go political. It is my plea. Yes, Leader of the Opposition, go ahead.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** The Right Honorable Speaker, I want to assure you from the bottom of my heart that colleagues on this side are appreciative of the fact that Sierra Leone has the MCC.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** And let me tell you, this is not the first time for Sierra Leone to benefit from MCC. In 2014, *[Undertone]* no, let me make my Point, I am not debating, allow me. I know I am making sense.

**THE SPEAKER:** Allow the Leader

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2014 Sierra Leone benefited from the threshold, which was **\$48Mln**. And that very program was closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March, 2021. So it does not take into consideration which government is in power.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, certainly

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** It takes into consideration Sierra Leone as a nation. Even when APC left and SLPP came, they were still funding the threshold until it was closed on the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. So let us all support this because we do not know what will happen. When we [APC] come to power, it shall be also given to us.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. With the greatest respect to the Leader of the Opposition, I know that he is genuine about this nation, just as all of us who might have our differences here and there. But I know we are all genuine; I know we all want this nation to develop. So yes, Acting Leader of Government Business.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** I had wanted not to say anything but let me say this. I was in this Parliament when the government of Sierra Leone qualified for the threshold in 2014.

**SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** We qualified for the threshold because we did not achieve all the benchmarks for the Compact. And today we have a Compact of **\$480MIn** so we should not politicize this one.

**THE SPEAKER:** Leader of Government Business, do not go political on this. I had warned; do not go political on this. This is your document. Yes, Honorable Barrie, proceed.

**HON. IBRAHIM BARRIE:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, yes, we welcome the MCC, we thank the United States Government, and we believe that the MCC Compact will play a key role in addressing the problem in our Energy Sector.

Mr Speaker, to add to what my Leader said, we on this side welcome the Compact, but we urge caution. Mr Speaker, for any projects where they are funding something above **\$1MIn**, whether it is for Government or Non-Governmental Organization, you have to ensure that you exercise caution in order to achieve the goals and vision of that particular project. Mr Speaker, according to the US Ambassador's recent post via the US Embassy Page, he stated that they are committed to support the Compact, and they also hope that the Government of Sierra Leone will fulfill or meet the conditions attached to the award of this Compact. And one of the conditions is to ensure that the 84 Recommendations from the Tripartite are fully achieved, and that is what we want to remind this House about. One of the critical Recommendations for the achievement of this Compact is to ensure we reform our Electoral System. Is that a crime, Mr Speaker? Is it a crime to reform our Election System?

**SPEAKER:** Certainly, not.

**HON. IBRAHIM BARRIE :** We need to remind ourselves that in as much as yes, we welcome this Compact, but we want to see and proudly say at the end of this project that all the conditions attached to the award of this Compact have been met. Is that a crime? *[Undertone]* he is my student, he likes to interrupt his lecturer

**THE SPEAKER:** If you are a student you have to be very careful *[laughter]*

**HON. IBRAHIM BARRIE:** He is my student, he likes to interrupt his lecturer and he has my class this weekend *[laughter]*.

Mr Speaker, let me seize this opportunity to again commend the government and to reassure, just like my Leader has done, that we are **100%** in support, and that we would play our part as Opposition to ensure that we achieve the goals of this Compact. But Mr Speaker, we urge caution, and we also recommend for us as a country to fully implement the 84 Recommendations attached to this compact, thank you Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Barrie. Let me at this stage plead on behalf of your student. And you student, you have to be very careful; know that you are in a very dangerous relationship *[Laughter]*. Honourable Hindolo Gevao, you have the Floor.

**HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for catching your eye. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must say today is one of my happiest days for this Agreement to be laid before us, signaling the implementation of the MCC Compact. For the edification of the public, I know that what we are privy to, they are not privy to. The MCC Compact has its object and I would just go briefly to the object. It says, *'the goal of this Compact is to reduce poverty through Economic Growth in Sierra Leone. MCC shall provide assistance in a manner that strengthens Good Governance, Economic Freedom and Investment in the people of Sierra Leone'*. My emphasis is **Investment in the people of Sierra Leone**; it is not saying **Investment in my village called Maamorto**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must commend the people of Sierra Leone for cooperating with the government of His Excellency President Julius Maada Bio for passing the benchmarks or the threshold to get the Compact. Mr Speaker, for a country to qualify for this Compact you must meet the requirements; your fight against Corruption, your Human Rights records and your Governance records. If you do not pass all of those benchmarks, you would never be qualified for the threshold. And for us, we say the accolade goes to all Sierra Leoneans. If we had not been disciplined as a

nation working within the parameters of not being corrupt, and those who tried to be corrupt being dealt with by the Anti-Corruption and the Judiciary, we would have not qualified. If our Human Rights records were not good, we would not have qualified, if our Governance Institutions were not good, we would not have qualified for this Compact.

Mr Speaker, I must commend His Excellency the President for a singular thing that he did. Being a champion of delivery, when he came into governance, during his first State of the Union Address, he said one of his objects is to clamp down on Corruption and Indiscipline. And when you have huge funds like this, you must make sure you put the right people in the right places so that the funds will be judiciously utilized. So even before the Compact was signed, the president took one of the most respectable Sierra Leoneans; somebody who has been with us in this House, somebody who is an expert in the Energy Sector for the longest of time, respected internationally, in the person of Alhaji Kolleh Kandeh Yumkella, and he appointed him to lead the Governance Coordinating Group. His Excellency appointed Dr Yumkella in that position because he foresaw that if these monies come you need reputable Sierra Leoneans to manage it. It goes without saying that this government has done pretty well in trying to improve our Electricity; nowadays you hardly go for a day without getting Electricity. With the MCC, I believe that the issue of going for a day without electricity will be a thing of the past.

Mr Speaker, I must say for a country to get close to being a developed country you must conquer your energy sector. Water and Electricity should be something your citizens must not worry about. We have been to other parts of the globe, even if you live in a fifty story building, you can get water, even if you live in the most remote part of some countries you will get electricity. This is what this government wants to do; this government wants to ensure that electricity is not only enjoyed by those in the city but also people who live in the provinces. So the president has started showing that commitment by ensuring that each and every Chiefdom Headquarter Town in Sierra Leone gets a Solar Grid. Like I always say, if you go to Kailahun, almost all the

Chiefdom Headquarter Towns and most of the big towns have Solar Grid. Gone are the days when people used to go out to ease themselves at night and see darkness approaching them like a human being. The president has lit the country. Sierra Leone is no more refer to as a city or country of darkness.

So like the Leader of the Opposition said, today is a day that Sierra Leoneans should celebrate unanimously. If there has never been anything that we can agree upon, let us agree on the fact that this government has done well ,this government has done excellent, its governing parameters have led us to win the MCC , its Human Rights and Governance trajectory have caused the United States government to sign the Compact with us. Mr Speaker, I want to assure all Sierra Leoneans that each and every penny of that Compact will be monitored by this House. We would follow where the money goes and ensure the money is spent for what it is meant for. That is why the right people have been appointed by His Excellency the President to ensure that these monies are judiciously used.

On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to thank all of those who played part in ensuring that this day be a reality; His Excellency the President, the Vice President, the Minister of Finance, the people in the Energy sector and even our brothers on the Opposition side. The peace we always try to maintain in this House is also taken into consideration for us to get this money. So I want to encourage all of us as Sierra Leoneans to continue the unison because when there is light in Freetown, it will not only be light for **GREEN**, **RED** or for **YELLOW**; there will be light for Sierra Leoneans, and this is what we want. We always say, we are but one country, and we are one people. We have no other country that we run to but Sierra Leone, thank you, Mr Speaker.

**HON. TAMBA KELLIE:** Mr Speaker, let me join my Honourable Colleagues in thanking the Americans for giving us this assistance. It is timely, and I speak as someone who actually implemented the threshold program which was a precondition for the attainment of the Compact. The regulation of the electricity and water sectors to improve their operational efficiency, leading to quality delivery formed part of the

preconditions set for the Compact. By the time I left in 2018 as the first Director General of the Sierra Leone Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission, all the regulations in terms of quality service for water and electricity were in place.

Mr Speaker, in as much as the Compact is a laudable assistance to this country, I need to draw the attention of Honourable Members to certain technical matters. I have gone through the entire schedule, and I have seen that the emphasis is on distribution and transmission, but no provision for generation. I think that is a bit of a lacuna because the way the electricity sector works is that you generate, you transmit and then you distribute. But the emphasis here is on distribution and transmission. Already we have two transmission lines, which are the Bumbuna line and the CLSG line which traverses our country to Liberia. I am not trying to criticize the government, I know it is an assistance given to us and we are bound to accept what we are given. However, funds should have been given to that aspect. You can have all the poles but if you cannot generate electricity, people will use the belts as lines to hang their washing. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I want to draw your attention to is the emphasis given to the capacity building of EDSA. Mr Speaker, I can tell you, when I came from England, I was the Legal Counsel for National Power Authority. We unbundled it and then created EDSA and EGTC. I can tell you, so much money has gone into the capacity building of EDSA; over **\$50,000**, yet, the transmission sector which is EGTC, who are actually going to be dealing with the major aspects are considered less. When you look at the Agreement, the main areas that are actually going to attract the bulk of the funding are the Transmission Dispatch, the Transmission Backbone and the Southern Transmission Corridor. Yet, the Transmission Engineers who will be dealing with that are given very little amount, almost infinitesimal. Again, that is not a fault of the Government of Sierra Leone, but I think it is a lacuna and something needs to be done about it. If there is any way we can rejig this whole Compact and bring in the generation component, the better. We have over **160** kilowatts installed capacity of Hydro in Kono and we have about **25** kilowatts in Moyamba. These are our generation facilities which will develop. Once those are

developed, then we can talk about transmission and distribution. Now we have the transmission line from Ivory Coast, traversing our country, but at the moment we are not benefiting from it because we are not generating anything. Instead, we are buying Power from Ivory Coast, and until that time when we develop our own generation facility, we cannot benefit from that project. So, Mr Speaker, I just wanted to draw your attention to these technical lacunae which I observed.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Mr Minister, I do not really intend to barrack or lampoon the effort you have made; no, that is not my intention *[undertones]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, you have not heard anything from Honourable Tamba Kelly *[Laughter]*

**HON. TAMBA KELLIE:** Mr Speaker, if you look at Program Administration and Control and Program Administration,

**THE SPEAKER:** Maybe Honourable Daniel Koroma can tell you something *[Laughter]*.

**HON. TAMBA KELLIE:** Mr Speaker, the amount alone that is being spent on Administration is so colossal; almost one- third [1/3] of the entire funding. Why is that case, I do not know and it is not my duty to question it. Well, I can question it because I am here as my people's representative. But Mr Minister, maybe that is one other area you would have to reflect upon. So all in all, let me thank the Government for completing this project. As my Leader alluded, this project started back in 2012; it spans over 10 years, and so one must congratulate the president for focusing on this project. As it has been said from the other side, the president made this his prime objective to attain, and thanks to him for attending this. So Mr Speaker, this is just a little comment I wanted to make, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Tamba Kellie. Honourable Members, at this stage, may I recognize the presence of Honourable Kandeh Kolleh Yumkellah. Of course, you all know he is one of us.

Honourable Kandeh Kolleh Yumkellah and the Honorable Minister of Finance, please, please take note of some of the issues that have been raised by Members of Parliament; they are very serious issues, thank you.

Honourable FallahTengbeh, we have a long day today, so let us say 10 minutes. Is 10 minutes too much? 5 minutes? Okay. I would allow the Leaders for more than 5 minutes, but all others, 5minutes, please.

**HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH:** Mr Speaker, thank you for allowing me to add my voice to today's debate in this kind of propitious gathering clustered with political intelligences. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the former Speaker would say, *'did you see that coming?'* [Laughter]. Honourable Member, Proceed,

**HON. FALLAH K. TENGBEH:** Mr Speaker, this is the first time for Sierra Leone to bring home this kind of huge amount. And for me, I must say we have to celebrate President Bio. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members let me lay a quick premise before I get into the debate proper.

Mr Speaker for a country to bring home this kind of huge amount depicts the fact that it must have been in compliance with Good Governance issues. There must have been economic freedom and above all, transparency in public finance system. And if that is a truism, then I will also say there is every need for us to celebrate president Bio and his team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agreement in question is not contentious. Mr Speaker, if you go through the Agreement, the goals and objectives of the said Agreement clearly provide an insight as to what Sierra Leone will look like, going forward. Very soon, we are going to see increased coverage in our transmission and distribution system. I am an Electrical Engineer with 14 years hands on experience. I want to agree with my colleague, Honourable Member of Parliament; reading through the document last night, I did not see anything about generation, and that was a

concern to me, and when we came this morning, I discussed it briefly with my Chairman. To me, if there is any way as a nation we could sit and recommend for possible amendment so that some amount of the money could be provided for electricity generation, I think it will be better.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, having said that, I would like to say that this Agreement is a fine Agreement because the projects that are about to be implemented make provision for modern systems to be incorporated into our distribution and transmission systems. Transformers will be installed with protection capability, and that is what we want, such that if there is fault in between the lines, you would be able to monitor it quickly from a skidder system that is also embedded in this Agreement with a view of preventing the problem before it occurs. To me, that is a very good technology that has been incorporated into the system.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, some of the problems that this said Agreement will eliminate after a successful implementation of the project are as follows:

1. Problems that we face today as a nation in terms of voltage sags or dips. That is to say, if you are expecting 220 Volts as an end user, you will end up getting 190 or 180 Volts. With this Compact project, those problems will be eliminated
2. Another problem that will be drastically reduced, especially from our Harmonic systems is that of the problems that we usually face from our Transformers and other relay logic systems. The Harmonics that we now face will be drastically reduced.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, going through the Agreement, as a Sierra Leonean I felt good. This is a very good program for us, and I am talking from a technical standpoint of view,

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing that is key and I am so impressed about is the Predictive Maintenance system put in place in this Agreement. No wonder people like Dr Kandeh Yumkellah are around, so I know that the goodies will be there. Predictive Maintenance is something that is going to help us a lot based on this

Agreement. Instead of saying we have to wait until the systems are down, predictive maintenance will proffer solutions so that the system can be stopped for an hour or two, then do quick maintenance and continue operation. So these are all good programs embedded in this Agreement.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I see nothing bad about this Agreement. Members on the other side would say yes, there are clauses attached to it for implementation. But the fact is, as Honourable Members, it is but a truism that we should always think positively as to how we can catapult Sierra Leone to a better height. And if we are saying we want to catapult Sierra Leone to a better height, what we do is to ensure that we support this program. Like the Honourable Member from Kailahun was saying, we must put mechanisms in place to support this program. As Honourable Member and other stakeholders, we must provide technical monitoring during Operations and Maintenance [O&M]. If all of that is achieved, then I want to assure the nation that the Agreement in this Compact is one that is good for Mama Sierra Leone, thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you Honourable Member for your contribution.

**HON. PETER YAMBA KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honorable Members. I want to join all the previous speakers who have kindly and thoughtfully showered some praises on the Government of the United States for providing this largess to our country. We want to thank them very much, and let it be on record that Sierra Leone is highly pleased about that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we are doing here today is a condition precedent for the MCC funding. This is couched in Section 7[1], Article 7, '*that the Compact to be submitted to and approved by parliament of Sierra Leone*'. And this is where I want to thank the Minister of Finance for bringing it to the House. It is particularly so because I think we have already started hearing that the Compact business is already going on, true or not true, but there are those insinuations. I was on a Radio program last week where a member from the Strategic Communications Unit

alluded to this fact that government was already far ahead in the implementation of the Compact. So bringing it here today is a good one, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me declare from the outset that it would be completely unreasonable for anyone to think that the Compact is not good for Sierra Leone. It would also be completely out of order for anyone; any person or party to politicize this Compact because, factually, it is not because we are beautiful as a country, it is not because we are very perfect as a country; it is because the people of Sierra Leone are seen to be in dire need. It is their sufferings; it is their circumstance that has led us to get this one. So in that case, we must in this House wear the Sierra Leone hat by speaking truth to ourselves.

Mr Speaker, allow me to opine therefore that we need to celebrate this Compact with caution; in other words, with some kind of mixed feelings. Honourable Members, please do not get me wrong. By this I mean, we must be happy but as well, be very, very unhappy; a bitter-sweet situation. We should be happy because electricity or energy is essentially the sector that holds the keys to any development of a nation. So for us to have the opportunity to enhance that sector, we should be so very happy. but we should also actually look at ourselves and be a little bit unhappy because, as a country that has so much promise, a country that is endowed, a country that should be looked up to, yet we are a country that is so vulnerable, so poor and so dependable on alms. We should not be too happy about that. It should give us a reason to think inwardly, to introspect how we have been carrying on with the business of this country. So I would compare this situation to a song made by Bob Marley where he alluded that, '*in the abundance of water, we are still thirsty*'. I think we deserve to have a rethink quietly in our little corners.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with that said, reading the Compact, you can actually allow yourself to deduce one thing, and for me, which is **Accountability, Accountability, Accountability**; Accountability in financial probity, and Accountability in political good behavior. Mr Speaker, these are couched in the

conditions precedent for the fund- it is clear. And this is where we are told, if you do this, we will give you our money, and if you do not do this, we will not give you our money. So again, we come back to say we should celebrate with caution; if we do not do the needful we can start and end up losing, and what is shame will that be for our country.

So with the financial side of it; the probity, we should ensure that we demonstrate how far we have come with Accountability, how far we have come with tackling Corruption and how far we have come with improving our behavior in terms of how we conduct public money. With the political good behavior, it is actually about how far we have worked the talk

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you have one more minute.

**HON. PETER YAMBA KOROMA:** Thank you, sir. So, that includes upholding the democratic tenets that are central to this MCC. Because of the exigency of time, I want to conclude by encouraging all of us and the government to ensure that we do due diligence; which means magnanimity from the part of government and all of us, maybe by deciding to bend backwards to let it happen, because it is very good for our country and our People, I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Tamba Johnny, you have the Floor.

**HON. TAMBA SIMEON JOHNNY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to lend my voice to this all important discussion. First of all, I want to thank His Excellency the President, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, who has been very much passionate to ensure that before he leaves the seat of power, majority of Sierra Leoneans have sufficient electricity, and not sleep in darkness anymore. If God Almighty that created us could not operate in darkness, which individual can ever operate in darkness and succeed? I wish this particular event today could have happened in any theoretical setting, it could have prompted a song like this;

*Tiday na Gladi day,*

*Na Gladi day*

*Na Gladi dayyyy [repeated chorus twice]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you know, I want to thank also the people of United States of America who have deemed it fit to put aside this amount so that we can benefit from it. When other Members were lending their voices to the debate, they expressed concern over the fact that the Compact is only talking about distribution and transmission lines, leaving the aspect of the generation of electricity. Honourable Members, I would also want to allay your fear by stating that President Bio is not only catering for distribution line, but generation as well. Not too long ago, the Chairman that was appointed by His Excellency in the person of Dr Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella was in Vienna with his team. When they returned, it was broadcast in this country that they have brought largesse close to the tune of **1BIn**, and that particular money is meant for nothing else, but the generation of electricity. As we are discussing, there is also a powerful delegation sent to Nairobi where they are showcasing Sierra Leone Renewable Energy potential to the World Summit currently going on in Kenya. So, if you are here expressing doubt as to where we are going to get the electricity after we have got the transmission and distribution lines, I want to allay your fears that the electricity generation aspect is also in the pipeline, and it is going to be actualized in a shortest possible time.

Also, Mr Speaker, let me tell this House why it is good for us to have this opportunity, and I would use Port Loko as a practical example. During the peak of rains, the Bankasoka in Port Loko District generates **2** Megawatts of electricity. It would surprise you to know that only **50** Kilowatts of that **2** Megawatts is used by Port Loko. Some of the Turbines have to be put off so as to prevent damaged. If we happen to get this distribution line, I believe, Lunsar will not go without electricity, Lungi where the Leader of Opposition is coming from will not go without electricity and Kambia will not go without electricity. The Port Loko electricity can be extracted and sent to Lungi, Lunsar and Kambia after the completion of this particular project.

Mr Speaker, we also know that there is another electricity generation facility at Makali, but it has not been utilized properly because there are no distribution facilities. We thank God for bestowing wisdom to His Excellency, and for the first time in the history of this country, we are now having seven districts electricity project funded by resources generated in this country. The only thing that remains is for us to have the electricity distributed from one point to the other, and that cannot happen if we do not have proper distribution lines. Why must Kailahun go without electricity, when Kenema has enough of it from the CLSG Power supply? Why should Pujehun go without electricity when the electric poles are passing very close to Pujehun town?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we have these distribution lines, I believe whosoever had enough electricity will be able to supply other communities. That is the reason I consider this particular grant as one of the best Grants we have ever received in this country. When Honourable Barrie was talking about lending credence to soldiers who have laid their lives for the protection of this country, I told him, yes, we should also lend the same credence to Retire Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, because he was one of those who laid their lives on the line to protect this country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, one minute more.

**HON. TAMBA S. JOHNNY:** So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to thank all those who have worked so far, especially the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Human Rights Commission, and every Sierra Leonean who has worked to make sure that we realize this landmark achievement. On that note, I want to thank everybody, including you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Tamba Simeon Johnny. Honourable Mohammed Alpha Jalloh, the Floor is yours.

**HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Mohammed Alpha Jalloh, and I bring you greetings from the beautiful people of Falaba; the land of milk and honey.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is no doubt that the people of this country need the MCC Compact, and we in the APC are happy that this Compact is actualized, even though the cynics may not believe this.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I want to thank the people of the United States of America, the MCC, and I also want to thank the Government of Sierra Leone, especially the respected Minister of Finance who championed this project. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I skim through this document yesterday I struggled to understand and to answer two very important questions and today, I am going to share these questions to this noble House. One of these questions is; why are we rushing for the ratification of this Agreement. This Agreement is only laid this morning and we are expected to ratify it now, giving us only few hours to look at it; this document was given to us yesterday, so we only have about 12 hours to look at it. Is it because we are so excited that we have a **\$480MIn** Grant or because we are afraid that the America people will change their minds? Or is it because there are some dubious clauses in this Agreement that you do not want us to see?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Jalloh, be guided.

**HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH:** I am, Mr Speaker. The reason why I am asking these questions is because...

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on. Hounorable Jalloh, be guided, please. Proceed.

**HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, the reason why I am asking these questions is because we were given three very important, voluminous and technical documents yesterday and we are expected to read through overnight and come to this House and debate them. How you expect us to be thorough and to do justice to these documents when they were only given to us yesterday?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, how many hours do you need to read a document?

**HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, for the records, I am referring to the Ratification and the Child's Right Bill. These documents; the Bills and the Agreement were given to us only yesterday, and the Child's Right Bill which has very controversial issues to address has **83** Pages and **174** long clauses. And this Compact which we are currently debating has **98** Pages, and the Program Implementation has **32** Pages. All of these sum up to a total of **213** long Pages and we are expected to consume all of these

materials last night and come here this morning to debate the issues. I do not know whether you think we are magicians or geniuses.

On that note, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make a disclaimer to the people of this country; the people who sent us to represent them in this House that if there is anything in these documents that they think is not good for them or is not in their best interest, please Sierra Leoneans be kind to us because we may not have seen it, **S.02**, ‘*nor to sellout we sellout*’. I know some people are quick to say, ‘*di MP den don sellout; nor to sellout we sellout*’.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the second issue that I have

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, you have one minute more.

**HON. MOHAMED ALPHA JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, please permit me to make my points.

The second point or issue that I have, already part of it was mentioned by the Honourable from Kailuhun; why do we have a Grant of **\$480MIn** and spend every penny of that money on Transmission Line and Zero Dollar on Generation? What are we expecting to transmit with the Transmission Lines if we are not generating enough power?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me put this into perspective. It is as if somebody is giving me **Le500MIn**, and tells me to generate power for my household, but that I should not spend part of that money to buy Solar Panels and Battery Bank; instead, I must spend it entirely on buying Cables, Switches, Socket, AC, Television etc, and spend the remainder of that money training my children on how to use the electricity when it final arrives- hoping that an investor will come and spend about **Le150MIn** and buy Solar Panel, Battery Bank and then generate Electricity and sell it to me for the rest of my live. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for me, that is not a wise decision. It would have been better if we use at least **Le150MIn** which I believe would have been enough to generate at least **30Mwt** power of Hydro Energy.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Jalloh. Hold on, your time is up.

Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara, you have the Floor.

**HON. REBECCA YEI KAMARA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on behalf of the Honourable Members from the great Kono

District, and the people of Kono District, I want to say thank you to His Excellency the President, Dr Julius Maada Bio and the people of the United States of America whose Tax monies have been put together to support this MCC fund.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also want to thank all those that contributed to ensure we meet the conditionality for this MCC fund. Special reference is made to the woman in the country because Gender Equality was one of the strong reasons they were looking forward to; looking at how women can be part of the governance of this country. Indeed our president who has that passion for the empowerment and promotion of women, demonstrated the political will to ensure that women are strengthen to be part of the governance of this Country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we believe that the MCC did not come because we agreed to sign the Tripartite; it came because we met the conditionality set for the Compact. The issue of Tripartite is just a condition we need to adhere to but that did not prompt the coming of that money- just to make it clear for our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe the sector that this money is going to support is one of the mitigating tools for Climate Change; and that is Renewable Energy.

Renewable Energy in Sierra Leone has improved drastically over the years because of the commitment and support we are getting from members and other development partners. I am not standing to talk about the nitty gritty in the document, but I want to tell you the benefit the Energy sector, if Improved will bring to Sierra Leoneans. When I talk of Sierra Leonean, I am not just referring to SLPP or APC, but every Sierra Leonean will benefit from this MCC. In fact when you look at the document, it does not say the responsibilities of President Julius Maada Bio or APC or SLPP, it says the responsibilities of the government of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what will the energy sector bring to us? If this Money comes and is implemented accurately, it will support the health sector, and maternal mortality will be reduced. Medical Operations will be done with enough electricity; people will go under Oxygen Machines with enough electricity and a lot of good things will happen in the health sector.

Also, it will help the Educational Sector. How will it help? Now we are seeing our educational sector being transformed from manual writing on Blackboard to using Technology; the use of Tablets, Projectors etc. If there is no electricity these technologies cannot be used in our schools. So in fact, this project will increase the quality of our education in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Compact will also increase our trade and other business sectors, thereby bringing money into the hands of young people, especially women in the Market, women in the Saloons, etc. For Example if you go to do your hair in the Saloon where there is no light, you would not have a beautiful hair style that you will be proud of, and fewer customers will visit such Saloon. But on the other hand, if a Saloon has electricity more customers will be attracted to that Saloon. I am making these examples to these lowest categories because these are the people we are catering for. If a Saloon has continuous electricity, customers can visit that facility even after 5:00pm or 6:00pm and pay for their hair to be done, which also translates to Economic Empowerment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this will further provide our young people around town with jobs; youths will be operating Internet Cafes and Barbing Shops with modern facilities to make money. So when people are talking about Bread and Butter, it all lies with your effort. With this electricity, I believe the effort of our young people will not go in vain, instead, it will help increase their economic capacity.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to end by saying that in Koidu Town, Kono District, we hardly experience blackout, except there is a technical problem. This is because of the CLSG.

*Suspension of S.O 5 [2]*

**HON. REBECCA YEI KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was talking yesterday to a neighbour who is, with all due respect, an APC supporter. But because of our cordial relationship in that community, that guy is the first person to show up for any program that I have, which shows you that Sierra Leone is for all of us. MCC has not just come for SLPP or APC; it has come for the people of Sierra Leone. We as

Honourable Members on that note have a role to play which is our Oversight role. We must do thorough oversight to ensure proper utilization and implementation of this MCC Funds, I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Member from Kono. Honourable Umpha Koroma, I would allow you five minutes.

**HON. DR. UMPHA G. S. KOROMA :** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want to extend our sincere gratitude to the MCC and United States of America by extension, for facilitating a project to improve the Economic Development for our respective nations, especially low and middle income countries. As a Parliament, we must note that over two hundred countries across the world face these examinations. And for Sierra Leone to benefit from these stringent huddles to get to this point is one we should thank ourselves as a nation for. But today, we should note that we are not going to be a Parliament that is not grateful, and today we should note that we are not going to be a nation that is not grateful. As a country, we have graduated steadily to this point, and graduations are made for a purpose, and graduations are celebrated for a purpose. We must not forget that in 2012, when the threshold was met by the previous government of the All People's Congress [APC], that was when the students went to school, and that was when the process of graduation started. And as we are here today celebrating, we must note that in that year, and in 2015 subsequently, Sierra Leone met 12 out of 20 indicators to be placed in this MCC Compact in which Sierra Leone was given a Millennium Challenge Account [MCA].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we must remember that we have come a long way. And when that started, constraints were analyzed, and our constraints where that we needed to address our water and energy sectors. So year after year, as a nation, we as people have worked diligently to ensure that we are here today to discuss this Agreement. We as Members of Parliament should be grateful that we are here in this Well to go through this document, which by the way, is very instructive and very deliberate. We must also recall that we are not the first nation that has benefited from it. So it is a structured program. Yes, indeed, as a Parliament, we have to oversee what

government does. But the MCC has structured its program in such a manner that even when Parliament does not show up, the Compact will regulate itself.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we were given two documents; one was a Program Implementation of the Agreement, and the second document is the Millennium Challenge Compact Agreement.

Mr Speaker, in the implementation of this Compact Agreement, we must note that the Compact states that the government has to do certain things in order to meet the requirement. And what I like so much about this document is the fact that in Article 1, the Compact states that '*the disposal of program assets consisting of real property should be done in a manner that is monitored*'. For far too long in this country, we see vehicles that have been given for specific purposes converted to personal properties. And as we note, we have entered into the program since the date the Letter was exchanged between the Government of the United States and the Government of Sierra Leone. So of course, as my Honourable Colleague from Bombali was stating, the implementations were underway because the Letters have already been exchanged, and that is envisaged in Section 7.3 of the second document. The program closure also talks about why it is important that within that five years period, all vehicles, all properties owned by MCA and by extension, the MCC should be branded as such, and that the usage of those properties should be strictly for their intended purpose. I am sure we are here today because the facilitation funds have to be put into force.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable, one minute more.

**HON. DR. UMPHA G. S. KOROMA:** We are here today because the **\$42MIn** has to be utilized. But as we are here today, we should recall that several statements have been made by various personalities outside the walls of this country, and in particular, the Ambassador of the United States to Sierra Leone. And as he ties this Compact to the tripartite implementation, we as a country should ensure that we follow it to the letter.

The property of this MCC belongs to the people of Sierra Leone, and we as an Opposition will not be controversial or be in contention of it. So if that is the case, we in the Opposition should ensure that everything that is said or that is not in this document

pertaining to Elections and Electoral Laws should be followed, and we should ensure that we monitor it to the fullest. As one of my colleagues MP was saying, we are not against election reforms, and nobody in this Well or in this country should be against election reforms.

On that note, I want to say thank you very much, Mr Speaker for giving me the opportunity to debate, and thank the United States Government for giving us this opportunity.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Umpha G. Koroma.

Honourable Musa S. Fofanah, take the Floor.

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Sahr Musa Fofanah [*Pormasu*] from Kono District. I want to take this special opportunity to thank His Excellency the President of Sierra Leone, the Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio. Mr Speaker, I must confess to you that the Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio is a very serious president, and the SLPP Government is a very serious government. Mr Speaker, let me just do a calculation for you. From 2018 to 2023, we moved from **16%** of electricity capacity in this country to **35%**. We did not hit the **45%** target because government was paying huge money to install new Transformers across the country. Bathrust Community which had existed for over 200 years without electricity was electrified by this government. Several Transformers have been destroyed by evil people across this country. In less than five years, this government has suffered the destruction of electricity installations than any other government in the history of this country. I do not know why Cables and Transformers were vandalized all over this country, including my District.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Musa Fofanah. Yes, Honourable AKK, did you want to say anything?

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** Yes, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, for the sanity of this debate, we have come a long way, and you have been monitoring and advising. I want the Honourable Member from Kono to limit himself to the document maybe that will avert us from destroying this very fine Agreement before us. If he continues on the

trend he is taking now, we would support him effectively to make it very Good. Please warn him.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable AKK, yes, I am going to warn him. Let me warn you, Honourable Musa Fofanah, be guided in your debate. But what I am saying, Honourable AKK is that I won't sit here and allow anybody to deliberately blame any political party for what was done. But again, whatever the Honourable Member is talking about was actually done, and as a Parliament, we should be united in condemning that kind of act. Is only that I would not allow that blame to be attributed to any political party, but it is a matter of fact that that particular act was committed by citizens of this country, and I consider that extremely terrible.

So please, Honourable Fofanah, I would only warn you to be guided in your debate.

**HON. MUSA S. FOFANAH:** Thank you, Mr Speakers. Mr Speake, I am a senior MP, for that matter.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Fofanah

**HON. SAA EMERSON LAMINA:** Mr Speaker, you were here seated the other day when the Leader of the Opposition raised an alarm on those that vandalized the Ex-Airport Administration and all its furniture. The Leader of Government Business supported him, and even pushed forward for an Investigative Committee to be set up. The Honourable Member from Kono did not call any name, except if my colleague Honourable Member wants to attribute those Hooligans and Vagabonds to a political party. Honourable Fofanah was very professional that he did not name a political party; neither mentioned the name of any person. So, the Honourable Member from Kambia, I crave on you to trend on peace.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable AKK, I am please requesting for no Member of Parliament to be put in the limelight for this because we are leaders, and we cannot in any way tolerate that kind of act. So let us not put ourselves in any limelight, and let us call things by their names; that that particular act was committed by citizens of this country, and it was wrong.

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, perhaps the Deputy Leader and Honourable Fofanah have not understood my point. The Honourable Member from

Kono, Honourable Musa Fofanah was very much specific; he said ‘*within the past five years*,’ and these destructions he is talking about are occurring almost every other day. So when you attribute that to five years under a regime or a period, that is disingenuous, and he is imputing negative impact. That is why I saying I am more than capable to do what he is doing, and I am more a professional and a senior MP than he is claiming. If that is the way he wants to go, let us go that way.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright. Honorable Members, Order, Order! I would stand this House down if you continue this way. Honourable Musa Fofanah, proceed.

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I just want to say my government and the government of this country should have succeeded in achieving the **45%** target of energy if those destructions were not done on installations. Mr Speaker, for almost 58 years we were struggling with **16%** energy. Mr Speaker, within five years we achieved **19%**, and in addition to that, we were hoping to go up to **29%**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I attended an engagement recently with Honourable Dr Kandeh Koleh Yumkelleh, a former Member of this House and a serious professional. During the engagement, he was more focused on the Local-local strategy. He talked about the B-Kongor Falls in Kono and Kenema, the Dodo Rehabilitation, the Betma Project and the Bumbuna [2]. These are owned by us, and we pray for this government to succeed in installing some of these developments.

Mr Speaker, if you go to the seven town Electrification Projects, you would realize that electrification is not cheap; it is very expensive. For five years this government has been struggling to install electricity in Pujehun and Kambia, and as we speak, installation is going on in Kambia. Mr Speaker, you know that my father came from Kambia and I always visit Kambia every two months, and trust me, the installation is going on in Kambia.

Mr Speaker, to tell you that this government is a serious government that believes in national unity, let me touch on the MCC. Mr Speaker, permit me to read Anex **1.4**,

Roman figure three [iii] of this document which says, *'the Bumbuna Freetown Line upgrade activity aims to provide centralized and more reliable grid access to the major towns and economic centers in the north of Sierra Leone. This activity shall include the installation of the **161/33 / 11k** Substation at Makeni and Lunsar, both to locate along the Bumbuna Freetown **161 kv** Transmission line, as well as center of economic activities'*.

Mr Speaker, it further goes on to say, *'the substation noted above under this transmission depot center activity, the program shall also find the installation of a Fiber Optic upgrade for the **161 kv** Transmission Line, which shall necessitate retirement of the existing shield wire power supply to Makeni that shall supply from the new Makeni **161 kv** substation'*.

Mr Speaker, even the West Africa Power Pole that came from Ivory Coast was taken to Kenema, Bo, Kono and then to Bumbuna, and Freetown benefited from the Bumbuna. This is to tell you that we are not only democratic because we are SLPP, but because we are Sierra Leonean Party, and we believe that this document and the MCC are going to succeed for the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, you can be assured that had it not been the destruction of the **161** or the **225** Transmission Line in Kono by fire, we would have been on constant electricity in Kono. So we just want to tell the Right Honourable Yumkelleh to please not forget to bring quality Transformers for these Transmission Lines. We always have fire incidents in Kono because of the long standing substandard materials we are still using in this country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Musa Fofonah, the Transformers we have even today are of the best quality. What we should be doing as a nation is to plead with our brothers and sisters not to destroy them. That is what we should be doing as a nation; pleading with them that some of these matters are not political matters, some of these matters are not matters of anger. We should all come together to ensure that these little facilities are maintained- they are of the best quality. I have seen some of them; by the way, we have the best quality. But, you know, we have these hooligans around, they

just go around destroying these Transformers, they do not want others to benefit, and some create the impression that they are doing that because they want to sell the cables. How can they destroy whole Transformers worth Millions and Millions of Leones for the cable? It is quite unbelievable. Yes, Honourable Member, proceed. Try to conclude now; you have one Minute to do that.

**HON. MUSA FOFANAH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I must conclude by saying we would support the MCC document, and I go with my colleagues who talked about the Oversight responsibilities from Parliament. We must appreciate the Energy Committee; they have been doing very well, but to be very honest, let us behave as citizens, and not none nationalists.

Mr Speaker, I would like to end by saying thank you to His Excellency the President, the Honourable Vice President who led this team, Madam First Lady and the rest of the Ministers who did their best to keep the Graph of the MCC high in five years [2018 - 2023]. Thank you Mr Minister for a job well done and God bless you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, let me at this stage make this very clear to the people of Sierra Leone; the 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament is a far cry from the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The 6<sup>th</sup> Parliament is extremely responsible when it comes to supporting the development agenda of the current government. And I want to take this opportunity to thank Members of the Opposition Party, particularly the Leadership, and of course, Members of the Sierra Leone People's Party. We have been united when it comes to development matters. There is no way I am going to sit here to criticize any Member of Parliament for undermining the development of Sierra Leone. I am so proud of this House, which is the more reason when some of these issues come up I intervene so that we do not put ourselves in the limelight to create the impression as if some of these hooligans are our friends. They cannot be our friends, because we are all leaders, and we have been voted to come here to represent our people so that at least we have sympathy for the nation. Thank you very much, Honorable Members for your support always to ensure that we do what is best for this nation. Honorable AKK, you now have the Floor.

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is a unique day for our country, and realities are catching up with us. Mr Speaker, I have listened to colleagues across the aisle, complaining that the most important thing this MCC is going to address is the issue of Transmission and Distribution. Most times, as a nation, what you request is what you get Aid for. I remember we were in this Well from 2020 to 2023, and if you listened to the Honourable Member from Kono, he was giving figures regarding the extent to which our generation has grown. So, when people say it is all about Distribution, Transmission, it is because we created an impression of a country where we have enough electricity. *'Enough electricity'* was the phrase. So if we presented a case as if we had enough electricity, then our problem was lack of distribution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, not too long ago, I said in this Well that as a nation, neglecting the Bumbuna Phase 2 is an outcry we must take seriously as Members of Parliament. The Bumbuna Phase 2, if implemented, will address most of the problems associated with the generation of power. Now we find ourselves in a situation wherein, **S.0 2**, *'na di Pan dem we dae kan was so, res nor dae na di pot'*.

We are going to have all the Connection and Distribution Lines set up with this MCC but sadly enough, we have not generated enough power to be distributed. So meaning, we are going to address one aspect, and the other aspect is left unaddressed.

The inadequacies still continue as a nation. So my first appeal is, as a nation, let us look out for more avenues to generate the much needed energy for our people. Whatever it is, in terms of cost or whatever, I am sure the Bumbuna Phase 2 is of lesser cost than any makeshift arrangement, including the Karpower Ship. If we go back and address this situation, it will help us as a nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, no nation thrives with Transmission, and no nation thrives without distribution. You can only boost the energy sector when you generate before you distribute. But today, we are going to have distribution lines but no means for generation. I have seen all the projects; whilst the debate was going on Mr Speaker, I went out and looked at Presidential Address after Presidential Address. This issue of

transmission and distribution has been addressed. We have had funding from different organizations, all in the name of addressing distribution and transmission, yet still the problem remains the same.

Mr Speaker, I agree with my brother who said the people are carting away or destroying the infrastructure of the electricity sector. This has been a problem in our country, and that is how the situation of creating makeshift buildings around our substations and having security personnel deployed came about. But that is just one way to go. How do we improve some of those makeshift facilities, including the welfare of those security personnel?

Mr Speaker, as we speak, we still have much to do in getting better energy in our country. Some people may not know the importance of energy to the economy of our country. No country attracts serious investors if you do not have enough Power Supply; no country attracts investors if you do not have the basic Energy Sector Reforms. From 2018 we have been reforming the energy sector; every document you read, you would see something about the reforms of the energy sector. But the question is, how reflective are those reforms in our lives? For some of us who live in the east, it is worse off. So we are saying we need to do better in the energy sector.

My brother, Honourable Gevao tried to talk about disassociating this document to that of the Agreement of National Unity and the Tripartite. When you are given some of these facilities, they are given with conditionality. One thing I do not want my country to miss out is the conditionality of this Compact. It is difficult to reach this level, but it is disgraceful as a nation to step out of it. So as a country, what can we do to solidify our gains in the MCC? It is all about one thing; *Cohesion*. Whatever you read here, the bottom line is '*Cohesion*'; how we work together as a nation, how we tolerate one another, how we ensure we do not misuse the police over a set of people as against the others. This is what we talk about; building our Democracy.

It is a shame we are being pegged on the MCC for our democratic credentials. And some of us have said this over and again, that until we build our democratic credentials, we cannot attract the world's investment. This is no novelty; we have said this over and over again. Worse off, as a nation, we find ourselves today where we have been arm-

twisted to implement what we would have done for ourselves. Now we face conditions upon conditions for us to work together. But the Bible says can two work together? And it went further to say, unless they agree.

So as we say, Mr Speaker, whatever it is, even in the Agreement of National Unity, the basic things we are able to do as a government, we have still not done. Mr Speaker, you know how much we have engaged you, even on the things that affect us. What about releasing prisoners? At least we have counted those that are in custody, is it difficult to release them, now that we have identified them? These are basic things we need to do without even having somebody to force us to do them.

Again, even in Parliament we cannot understand ourselves; when you say certain things that are of national interest, people think it is political. It shows the level at which we understand things.

Mr Speaker, let me end by saying that it is difficult sometimes when as you are a young politician you flip flop from political parties. When you do that, you are like poised to always satisfy your new masters. When I listened to Honourable Gevao, he was presenting facts, but from other people they were trying to impress the SLPP, I wish them well in the SLPP.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable AKK.

Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin, proceed.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I have carefully listened to colleagues who have added their voices to these very important documents. I listened to the young Member of Parliament from Falaba who asked as to why we are so eager to handle this document. Mr Speaker, Sierra Leoneans are no longer Sierra Leoneans; we are all behaving now like Nigerians. When there is a treasure over there to be attained, nobody would wait; they would do everything humanly possible to reach out and get that treasure. When I was a young boy in my village selling Kola Nuts, I never waited

too long to be paid by my customers. Money in somebody's pocket is not your money. It is only when received by you that it becomes your money. So when I listened to my Opposition Whip talking about **S.0 2**, '*was pan*', I said to myself that it is only when you wash your pan that you can place your food in it. You cannot dish any good dish if you do not wash your pan and put it on a platform to dry.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these documents in front of us have been long awaited. When I saw my brother, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura and Madam Alice P Albright appending their signatures to this document on the 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2024, I felt like I was right there with them, and I felt my spirit telling me that we are about to earn **50%** of our 2024 Annual Budget which was less than **\$1Bln**. So for us to have money like that, it means we have worked for it; from His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio, to all his Ministers, including my learned colleague, Honourable Kandeh Yumkella. I worked with Dr Yumkella at the time we did the Certificate Audit, and I know he is a dedicated man. I knew that when it comes to representing us, Dr Kandeh will excel. I want to applaud everyone who added his or her effort to this achievement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking about where we were, **16%** to **36%** and where we intend to go, it is something that we have to be proud of as Sierra Leoneans. In 2014 we achieved **\$44Mln** and today we are talking about **\$480Mln** which is 10.9 times the strength of what we have achieved. This achievement should go to all Sierra Leoneans and we should be proud of this. When I put on the Green, White, Blue and the United States flag logos on my jacket, I am not just wearing them for fancy purposes. For the past 25 years, I have scrupulously represented Sierra Leone in every minimal activity. For you to even get **\$10** from the United States of America, you must be somebody that they look up to, and you have fulfilled all the criteria that meet their demands. If you go back to the time that projects were implemented in Sierra Leone during the 80s, when you apply for projects in those days **17%** of that project has to be funded by the local. If we are taking that context into consideration today, Sierra Leone could have added 68 point **\$5.71Mln** have been done to this. According to my

financial adviser, the money that he highlighted to us is very minimal, and I believe it is not something to worry about.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honorable Lamin, one minute more.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** For us to be very proud of ourselves in what we have achieved, I want to draw the attention of this House to Page 16 of the Program Implementation Agreement. With the leave of Mr Speaker, the Millennium Challenge Account and Clause 3 & 4 [i], '*all applicable conditions precedent to Annex 2 have been duly satisfied and differ and waived and provided in this agreement*'.

If you go to [ii], '*No material default or breach of any covenant, obligations, responsibility of Sierra Leone, MCA Sierra Leone, or any other Sierra Leonean government entity as occurred and contained under this compact, this agreement and the supplementary agreement*'.

And to conclude that, I want to go to [vi], '*all Sierra Leonean government entities involved in this implementation of this program, including the implementing entity are coordinating successfully with MCA Sierra Leone and dedicating all necessary staff and resources to ensure the successful implementation of this program*'.

I felt good and proud to be a Sierra Leonean, and all of us should be proud to be Sierra Leoneans. On that note, Honourable Members, I want us to speedily ratify this Agreement so that this money will come home to Sierra Leone, thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable. Honourable Daniel Koroma, you have the Floor.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we on this side are all aware that right from the previous Governments to the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament, we on this side have always been the powerhouse guiding this House during Budget and Presidential Debates, about some of the issues that needs to be addressed as a government for us not to miss out in our achievement of the MCC Compact which we have got now. It has started long ago, and it was our desire that there should be no turning back. It should be progressive, progressive, progressive onto this stage, and there is still more to be done. On that note, I want to thank the Minister of Finance. Thank you very much, sir for a job well done.

I want to thank the Government of Sierra Leone, of which we are all part of. I want to congratulate ourselves as Opposition for this remarkable achievement. Only an insane person will kick against such blessing for this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to thank the US Government. In my opinion, the US Government is a little bit different based on Western policies towards Africa. The US Government is not an exception, but to some extent, they are a little bit different. So I want to thank them for that. And I have two questions to be answered; if it can be answered by Mr Minister, fine. If it cannot, then let us think about both questions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know MCC is a fine package and every country wants it, and now we are almost there. So my first question is, is there room for another MCC after this? Can Sierra Leone benefit from one MCC to another MCC? As a government in the making, it is my desire also to ensure that when we are in charge the people of Sierra Leone get another MCC. MCC is not for a particular government; it is for the people of Sierra Leone, and the benefit goes to all of us.

So Mr Speaker, I want to know through you, from Mr Minister, if there are various packages for MCC because we would want to work towards that.

Then secondly, what are the criteria to win MCC over and over and over and over again? What are the criteria? If you ask me, I would say you cannot convince me that the respect for the Rule of Law is one of the criteria. This is my personal opinion, because I know Sierra Leoneans in and out of this country are listening to me. You cannot convince me that respect for the Rule of Law is one of the criteria; that was my initial perception. But now I know there must be something different for which I thank the President. He knows the secrets, and that is why he went all out to go for that unknown. Thank you, Mr President for knowing the unknown. You cannot convince me that respect of Human Rights is one of the criteria. And for your information, I am over 50, and the remaining 50 years of my life is too short to convince me. So if you cannot convince me now, maybe you have to follow me to the other world to convince me that respect for the Rule of Law, respect for Human Rights and the fight against Corruption are some of the criteria to get MCC, I do not think so. That is my opinion, but

thankfully, my President knows what to do in order to get the MCC and he has done it, and for which I thank him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you ask me personally, I would say Sierra Leone and Africa are losing a lot, in my opinion. Mr Speaker, we have God's given MCC, more than 100 times this amount given to us. So just by this Singular thing with the MCC, let me say 1 out of 100 of God's given, we have those dancing and shouting and celebrate it when we are supposed to celebrate far more than this. But where is the problem?

Our problem is us.

Mr Speaker, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament, when I listened to the Lands Minister at the time he Tabled two Bills in Parliament; the Land Commission Bill and the Customary Land Rights Bill, I was so moved by the fact that by utilizing our land resources alone just for oil palm, after giving his statistical analysis, in the next five years oil palm alone can take care of Wage Bills in this country. In five years! I am on record, he is on record, go to the Hansard. It was stated that in less than five years, oil palm alone can take care of our Wage Bills. That excludes other potential sectors in agriculture; that excludes our mineral resources; that excludes our oil and gas; that excludes our human resources. All of which bundled together, I can refer to as God's given MCC. But do you know what has happened? This is my principal reason why I am thanking the US Government. Let us say for instance, the West Africa, Sierra Leone to be specific, we have **50** of this particular package, and out of that **50**, the West takes **49** and gives us **1** and then we celebrate. But you know why I thank them? I thank them for at least remembering to give us **1**, compared to others who gave us nothing.

Secondly, this singular **1** can benefit us more than all the **50** left to us to be managed for ourselves. If you check the entire Clause 2, the condition precedent is Zero Corruption; it cannot be corrupted. And this money is not going to President Bio's pocket; in fact he would not even set eyes on it. It is administered by three bodies; the MCC Sierra Leone, MCC and the Sierra Leone Government, and they all have their roles to play- zero corruption.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can tell you for free that **50** times of this MCC left to us as Sierra Leoneans to be managed by ourselves will leave us worse than even

now, and that is our problem. The solution is with you and me; until we are ready, the West will continue to exploit us and give us pittance. And now, because of their monitoring capacity and mechanisms, just the **1** given to us will benefit us more than the **100** God has given us in the past but we could not manage. The best we can do is to buy mansions, invest in the West; in Europe and in America. In fact, that is the most senseless part of African leaders; they invest in the West and do savings in their Banks abroad. When once they died, those Bank Accounts are frozen; the Banks refuse to remit those monies back to their countries. That is big fool, and until we depart from that, things will not work. We will continue to just suckle, **S. 0 2**, '*Half, half bobo wata.*' As my MP from Kailahun said, we are in pool of water and we are crying of thirst. So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in thanking this government, at least, we should all join hands to make sure that the little that is given to us is utilized well. **1** out of **50**, and the remaining **49** is gone. If we want our **49** we have the answer. Otherwise, if we are satisfied with how we are now, we would continue to be corrupt and the **49** will be taken away whiles the US Government manages the **1**. So, as far as I am concerned, these are some of the issues, and both of us are on the same page on this. Now you will understand where I was coming from, when I said I know of no law that says Agreement brought before Parliament cannot be amended, rather, they should be rejected and annulled. Some people thought it was out of bad fate or insubordination that I made that statement.

Can a sane MP annul MCC Agreement? Does it make sense? On the contrary, if there is something there that I consider as an insult, can't we amend it?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I refer you to Clause 5 [4] of the Implementation Agreements which says, the Implementation and Compact Agreements can be amended, but once it is amended, that amended version should not come to Parliament; it remains as it is. Do you expect MPs to accept that the document that they ratified can be amended and changed without bringing that document back to them? If that is the case, then why did we ratify it in the first place? In fact to me, that is an insult. Why do we ratify? Meaning, you have a hidden agenda, and you are coming here just for the sake of formality. And after the formality is over, you go into

your secret corner and change everything. Mr Speaker, is that acceptable? But again, is it enough for us to annul and return it? Is it prudent? Better still, can't we say no, you must come here, and then we proceed?

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, for the Interest on our package, we are supposed to open both Foreign and Leones Accounts. And once those Accounts are opened, MCC Funds are remitted into them, those Funds are bound to accrue Interest. In Section 3, Paragraph C, Sub-Paragraph [3], Page 15 says, '*the interest accrued by those monies belong to MCC*'. It is not talking about MCC Sierra Leone or Sierra Leone Government; they belong to the original source. And the Interest is born out of the seed money. And the seed money by virtue of our performance, and we know the hidden secret of which we have explored through His Excellency the President, the money rightfully belongs to us. As far as I am concerned, this money belongs to us provided we continue on the right footing. So to me, whatever Interest is accrued should belong to us also. But why should the Interests go back to the source? To me, that is just unacceptable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Page 18, Clause 4, Sub-Section [2] Paragraph [E] says, at the end of the implementation, the assets of the MCC belong to MCC, not us. Let us say for instance, if out of convenience they decide to build an Administrative Office here, at the end of everything, who should own that asset? MCC will own that asset instead of us. You know what the Agreement says? If we want to get that asset, we need to buy it from MCC. Otherwise, it stays as their property and it is called Reversionary Interest. Which means, after the original Interest, ownership thereafter goes back to MCC. Why should that asset not stay with us, when the cost of that particular asset was born out of the MCC funding and the contribution from Government? Mind you, out of this \$480Mln, Government will have to contribute also in order to continue our eligibility. So for example, if those assets are specifically built by Government funding which forms part of the broad MCC package, they still belong to MCC, and not MCC Sierra Leone, nor the Sierra Leone Government. So in my opinion, that is not correct.

Mr Speaker, there is one more issue for the attention of Mr Minister because I do not want him to fail. But if you do not comply, you will fail, and when you fail Sierra Leoneans have fail. So please, do not fail.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at Section 2 Subsections [3], Paragraph B, Page 8, you would see what I am about to point out. For instance, what is currently topical for this MCC is energy, energy, energy, and there are various sectors under Energy; EDSA, the Minister of Energy, Bumbuna Hydro and the likes- they all have their various administrations. And usually, those MDS used to get allocations from the Ministry of Finance. But this section is now saying, based on this MCC money, it may influence you to say, well now, we thank God there is MCC funding for EDSA and the Ministry of Energy. So for that reason, if the Ministry of Finance used to give **Le10MIn** to the Minister of Energy, it may now cut it down to **Le4MIn**. Mr Minister, it is saying you must inform them in writing and get their approval in writing. I do not know your present allocation, and I know you already have your figures now based on the financial year of government. I know you are a very hardworking and proactive Minister, and you may have done your homework already. In fact, I believe you must have completed your Finance Act because you are very proactive.

So my question now is, if that is the case, how will that Act match with this provision? Will it not cause you to fail? And by failing, MCC will not proceed; you must inform them in writing, and you must get the written approval. Now that you already have your Finance Act, you have interviewed all MBAs you already have your allocations, how can we reconcile that?

So to conclude, I want to thank you very much, and I urge all my colleagues to support this Agreement because it is not only the President Bill, not for SLPP Government, but for the benefit of all of us. Thank you very much, and God bless you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Daniel B. Koroma. Honourable Emerson Saa Lamina, proceed.

**HON. EMMERSON LAMINA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise on Section 40, Sub Section [4d] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, with your leave, it says, '*notwithstanding any provision of*

*this Constitution or any other law to the contrary, the president shall, without prejudice to any such law as may for the time being be adopted by Parliament, be responsible, in addition to the functions conferred upon him in the Constitution- for'*

Mr Speaker, [d] says, '*the execution of treaties, agreements or conventions in the name of Sierra Leone;*'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the president, ably supported by the Minister in the US have done their assignments, it is now left with us in Parliament to ratify this document. And we would do justice for the ratification of this document for one reason; it is not a controversial document. And because it is not a controversial document, I urge Members from both aisles to speedily approve this particular document.

Mr Speaker, this document is my baby. It would surprise you to know that for us to pass the MCC exam, the US Government could not even ask Government MPs. They may engage Government Ministers, but in this case, US Government exclusively engaged the Opposition MPs for something like three hours; myself, Doctor Yumkelleh and the Main Opposition Leader by then. We sat in the main Hall of the US Embassy for three hours examination, justifying why Sierra Leone must get the MCC. By then, the government's flagship was Education but because there was sufficient money for education, we needed to explain why Sierra Leone should actually adopt energy. Mr Speaker, I took advantage as the Chairman then and now for Mines and Mineral Resources, and I actually expounded on the potential of the Mineral Sector; how the Compact will benefit Koidu Limited, Marapa Mines, Sierra Rutile, Kingho and Leone Rock based on the potential the companies have to subscribe to energy. And the Examiners by then were marveled and they asked us as to whether we actually have all those facilities. Oh yes, for the justification, Dr Yumkellah was here, the energy experts who also supported my claims.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, our baby is seeing the light of day through ratification. We commend His Excellency, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio, I think he deserves an applause. We should commend President Bio because, before 2018 Sierra Leone was like **49%** on the MCC scorecard; we failed. As it turned out, president Bio promised to fulfill one of the main criteria which is Good Governance in the various

sectors. The president did promise the world that he was going to repeal the draconic Criminal Libel Law and he did. I participated in that process during the Fifth Parliament. Mr Speaker, His Excellency the president also told the world that he was going to abolish the death penalty and it was repealed before this House. Nobody will now be sentenced to death, rather, he or she will be sent to the Correctional Center to get some sense, even if it has to last for 250 years.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, His Excellency the President did not only campaign in his manifesto about the GEWE Act, he took it to the Cabinet, got approval and then brought it to the House for ratification. I and the Right Honorable, distinguished Senator Abdul Kargbo could now affirm that in the ECOWAS, it is only Senegal that can beat us as far as Gender or Female Representation is concerned. His Excellency the President did promise that the GEWE Act must and should be ratified. For the records, those are the criteria and the prerequisites for the attainment of the MCC Compact. And indeed, today we can count at least **30%** plus **4** women in Sierra Leone Parliament. And I have the strongest conviction that when women are in governance, whether at the Executive or the Legislative arm, corruption is minimized.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency the President did promise us that he would fight Corruption and indeed he fought Corruption. The money that the ACC has accrued through that young man *[Francis Ben Kaifala]* is so huge and we can do many developments with that. I am telling you, had it not been that he has a democratic credential, His Excellency President Maada Bio would not have held that non-permanent seat in the UN. Because of his rich democratic credential, battle tested in combat, he led the nation, and also in civilian clothes, he is leading the nation. Because of his rich democratic credentials today, Sierra Leone can now bag a nonpermanent seat in the UN. Congratulations Sierra Leone and Congratulation to all of us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is important that everyone puts hands on deck. I admire the Opposition Leader of a small country like The Gambia. The Opposition Leader of Gambia is in the ECOWAS Parliament, and I admire the zest, the passion and the zeal he moved for the ratification of the MCC Compact. And today, I should commend our Opposition for the efforts and the commendation you have actually

tendered for the utilization feature of this particular money; MCC money, **S .O 2**, ‘*White man money*’, we would all enjoy it, in Jesus name.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Operation Feed Salone which comprises of Inland Valley Swamps, Animals Husbandry, Agricultural Extension, and Crop Protection can actually not see the light of day without energy. In the US, somebody can cook a sauce for a whole week; it is just a matter of microwaving it and spends less money as far as feeding is concerned. That is the same facility we also want to enjoy.

Mr Speaker, you would hardly see someone with basic amenities like Freezer, Television, cold drinks and enough food stuff to jump to the streets to cause violence. Wicked politicians would hardly call on such youths to jump to the streets to demonstrate and they obey that politician. They would ask themselves as to why they must leave watching their European Premier Games or rich Nigerian movies and jump to the street to cause violence? So you see how that will also curtail violence? The MCC Compact is in line with Sierra Leone’s Mid Term Development Plan, Vision 2030. His Excellency the president between 2018 -2019 inherited just **16%** of our energy sector. Today, we can proudly count **36%**. You would begin to imagine by the time we would have implemented it in full in three years’ time, we would have gone for other development, rather than talking about this energy. We should indeed commend His Excellency.

Mr Speaker, this Compact also holds our feet to the water. If you look at Clause 5[1], it talks about termination in thirty days’ time if the needful is not done. Therefore, I would work hard for it not to be terminated. Clause 5.4 on the other hand talks of late payment. How would I wait until late payment comes in? I would work hard to fix that. Also look at the implementation document and the Program Implementation Plan. It also pushes us for transparency and accountability because it talks of audit trail. Because I have auditor hanging around me, I would work hard not to fall foul with alphabet **F** and alphabet **C** in the document. The Agreement also talks of M&E. We only need to put responsible people; performance stickers. And it is on this note I want to urge those that will be in the Committee of Energy in the second session of this sixth Parliament to have a very good attendance record, be effective, efficient and have an

open eye to develop a strong M & E bullet points to monitor the energy sector for us not to fail. Section 93 Sub Section [3] and Sub Section [6] give Parliament the power to play this oversight role. Interestingly, Section 107, sub section [2] gives Members of Parliament the power to summon the Minister, but the Minister does not have the power to command MPs. MPs might decide to call the Minister and say Mr Minister, as far as we are concerned, you are moving at a snail pace. Do you want us to fail? We cannot fail, give us explanation. We can ask the Minister critical questions, demanding correct answers- that is the power Parliament has.

Definitely Mr Speaker, you have to open your eyes wide to put in stronger MPs in the Committee of Energy in this Second Session of the Sixth Parliament. Mr Speaker, my colleague Honourable AKK is not here, therefore, I cannot comment on the statement he made on the Bumbuna. I would only talk less because he is not here, but it would have been a fine story for the Italians Recommendation. For the records, 1969 to 1972, the naturalness of B-Kongo between the Kono and Kenema Districts was so rich. I believe if S.I Koroma who was the main implementer of that B-Kongo project would have concentrated on B-Kongo rather than Bumbuna, the problem of the energy sector would have been something of the past. But I would talk less about that because Honourable AKK is not here, I wish he would have been here.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Compact is very rich that only a devilish Sierra Leonean can decide to undermine this particular project. The Compact is so rich to the extent that every Sierra Leonean will be very happy for a swift and smooth implementation so that by 2028, when the SLPP Government shall have got another victory, they will concentrate on other areas rather than electricity. And it is very important for all of us to be here. Peace is very important, I would not want to see a scenario wherein the Opposition matches out of Parliament by the time we ratify the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. I am so happy today because they are so focused, and all of us will be recorded in the book of history that we ratified this particular document.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader, do not go political

**HON. SAA EMMERSON LAMINA:** Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, I know very well with no inkling or doubts that my colleagues, whether from the East, West, North and South, are unanimously going to ratify this document to the joy of Sierra Leoneans. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Member. What is it, Deputy Speaker? You want to contribute? Be Very brief, please.

**HON. IBRAHIM T. CONTEH:** Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think Mr Speaker also deserves a very serious commendation because he has directed the debates in the national interest of Sierra Leone. For the first time in a long time, we have engaged in debating on either side; not talking politics, not calling names, not decrying anybody, but talking about Sierra Leone and how important this document is to Sierra Leone. All of that is as a result of the vision and direction of Mr Speaker. We pray for you to continue to lead us in this direction, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I want to take few minutes to highlight some key issues mentioned by Honourable Tamba Kellie. These issues are critical to the success and achievement of the deliberate decision taken by the Executive, led by His Excellency the President, to select from among the list of items that they had before them under Annex 1.1 to select Energy as the forerunner to run our MCC Compact.

Firstly, if you look at the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority, you would be shocked to know that of the total staff component that they have, **70%** are either on Contract or Par term basis. And that is the risk that we are facing every day. If you take somebody on contract, and the person worked for 20 years of his 25 years working lifespan, and you permanent him on the 21<sup>st</sup> year, or you terminate his service, what would you expect? These are the people that are going out to either do faulty connections or leading the electricity theft and destroying government facilities. So, part of the MCC program is focusing on capacity building. I think the first step in building the capacity in the energy sector is to ensure that we look at the staff strength of the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority, and we regularize the status of those people that are daily working for them tirelessly at night and in the morning so as to

ensure that they feel part of the process. That is a critical component that will ensure that the process and this MCC succeed.

Mr Speaker, the second issue has to do with EGTC. Mr Speaker, everybody in this Chamber and Sierra Leoneans watching at home know this, that at a certain point the Kar-Power Ship had to discontinue its service and Freetown went in darkness for days. And if you look at the MCC document, I am concerned by the fact that they are taking away internal generation capacity from Sierra Leone. EGTC would no longer have the capacity to generate power but to transmit. So what would that mean? Currently, Dr Yumkellah and team are working on getting cheaper power at **11** US Cents per kilowatt hour and they are still struggling to find that. If we can strengthen EGTC, they would provide power for us cheaper than **11** US Cents per kilowatt hour. But what is this Agreement doing? It would mean we would not as a nation, have any internal generation capacity; we would have to depend on IPPs. And if we are going to continue to depend on IPPs, the day they decide to stop the evacuation of power to the national grid, it would cause a serious concern, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, another concern I have is the fact that in this entire Agreement there is nothing about Bumbuna. And our most reliable energy source is Bumbuna. Currently, there are strides made by the government to ensure that we capacitate Bumbuna, and now we have the largest pool of money in the energy sector facing us. I think the first area to be strengthened is Bumbuna, and not Phase 2, I agree with the Honourable AKK on that note. Let me correct the Phase 2 aspect of Bumbuna. Mr Speaker, I do not want to talk politics, but the Phase 2 aspect of Bumbuna was awarded by the government of Sierra Leone to SELLE Hydro. To date, SELLE Hydro could not at any point be able to attract any bankable project to move SELLE forward. Why? Because the condition precedent to the disbursement of any funds to SELLE Hydro Power is in serious jeopardy because the energy sector; natural energy depends on water. The forest cover around that area is being depleted every day. So no Bank, no financial institution is ready to support SELLE Hydro. So, what I was expecting in this document is that in as much as we want to improve energy capacity, I feel our core focus would have been to develop Bumbuna. This is so

because, as per this document, we are going to focus on IPPs, and of course the IPPs we have are the Kar Power Ship, the West African Power Pole, and a lot of other IPPs around. The day they decide to shut down, it will pose a serious problem for us as a country.

So Mr Speaker, I feel compelled that I should draw the attention of the Minister and all those around the energy sector to try as much as possible to address these key concerns. What I did not see as well, is how we are going to manage a huge liability status of EGTC and EDSA.

Currently, if you look at the biggest liability agencies to the NRA are EDSA and EGTC. And it is clear that the MCC fund is not to be used to set off anything that is not MCC related. And if you are going to strengthen our energy sector and those that will be running it, the document is saying, at certain points, either at the phasing out of the MCC, EDSA and EGTC should be able to employ qualified personnel. Is that saying that the people at EDSA and EGTC are not qualified? No, I am just asking, I did not say that is what they are saying. Whether they are qualified or not qualified, if their debt status is suffocating them to operate properly, would they be able to take up the project at the completion of the project? These are critical issues I think the Minister should also consider. For us, this is a happy moment; it is a happy moment that we are going to finally address this long standing problem of energy. But if we are going to address it, we must address it in a way that is sustainable, we must address it in a way that the cost to the ordinary Sierra Leonean is low, and we must address it in a way that should anything happen to the IPPs, we should have internal generation capacity to substitute that. On that note Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much for giving me the platform.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Deputy. Leader of the Opposition, you have the Floor.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is always interesting to round up a debate because you would have been exposed to various opinions, thoughts and perceptions from other Members of Parliament. I have carefully listened to

Members from both sides of the aisle, and like the Deputy Speaker reiterated, MCC is for Sierra Leone; MCC is not tied to a specific government, it is tied to a period of time under which it is expected to be implemented.

But firstly, Mr Speaker, I want to thank the US Government for considering Sierra Leone, and it is evident that one of the primary reasons for MCC is to ensure that they promote economic growth in countries that are struggling with their economy, countries in which there is a stunted economy. It also aims at alleviating extreme poverty. So to us as a country, I want to believe that we should make good use of this opportunity because when the electricity sector is settled, I am sure that everybody will enjoy the privileges, regardless of your political shades or opinion.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are preconditions to benefiting from this MCC, and we must not lose sight of them. But before I go to these preconditions, Mr Speaker, permit me to firstly confirm to this House that our electricity sector has a role to play immensely to ensure that the investment from the American Government is sustainable. Very recently, Report from IMF indicated that Sierra Leone is losing so much money from the electricity sector. And also, Report from the World Bank stated that '*...the report stresses that these issues are compounded by insufficient revenue generation, which significantly undermines the sector's financial stability*'.

So Mr Speaker, this simply means that the electricity sector's financial stability is destabilized by insufficient revenue. So if we cannot generate revenue in the electricity sector, even if we have the best infrastructure, we would surely return to where we were. So, regardless of what is coming in, government should ensure that we institute proper modalities in the electricity sector as a fore-action waiting support that we are having from the American Government.

Mr Speaker, again, I asked myself the inevitable rhetoric after I subscribed **NLe200** for electricity and I was given 28 Units. When you look at the IMF Report, they are saying the electricity sector is not making profit, and if you also look at the World Bank Report, they too are saying the electricity sector is not generating revenue. So come to ask yourself the question, where is the problem? Most times we focus our attentions at the politicians and forget about the Civil Servants out there. So proper investigation and

modalities have to be instituted to ensure that the electricity sector make gains. And I am not sure that the lack of revenue generation should be attributed to the price of Top Up, no. The price of electricity is very expensive, and it should reflect, instead of reports coming out to say that we are not making money in the electricity sector. So, this is one of the things that as a country, we should pay attention to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a good number of people have showered sentiment on the American Government, and have also confirmed the necessity of this MCC. But please permit me to go to Article 5, Clause 5.1 of this Agreement which talks about *Termination or Suspension*.

Before I read this, what I want to make essentially clear here is that even when we have been awarded, it is possible that if we renege it will be suspended or terminated, as the case may be. Under Article 5.1, it says, *'either party may terminate the contract without cause to the entirety by giving one party 30 days prior written Notice. MCC may also terminate MCC funding without cause in a whole or in part by giving Sierra Leone 30 days prior written Notice'*.

So, in essence, they are saying they will terminate the MCC if Sierra Leone fails to comply with the obligation under the Compact or any other Agreement or Agreements entered into by it in connection with the compact or the program. So meaning, termination of this Agreement is not only contingent on our compliance with the MCC eligibility criteria, it also has to do with our compliance to any other Agreement that has been attributed to this MCC Agreement. So meaning, as a Government, we should ensure that it is not only MCC Agreement, but whatsoever Agreement that has been affiliated to the MCC Agreement is complied with to the letter. Now, let me just read an extract from this which says, *'Sierra Leone needs to continue to meet eligibility benchmark in these areas throughout the life of the Compact'*. So they are saying that the eligibility criteria must be met throughout the life of the compact. Meaning, even if the first disbursement is made, and there is an iota of fact that we are not complying, they will terminate or suspend the Agreement. Mr Speaker, I am advising that this is very important. It further goes on to say, *'including the full implementation of both the*

*Agreement for National Unity and the Joint Recommendations of the Tripartite Committee’.*

And when I associate it to what is here, Article 5, Clause [1b], it says, ‘*if Sierra Leone fails to comply with the obligations under this Compact or any other Agreement or Agreements entered into by it in connection with this Compact or any programs’.*

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the moment we renege as a nation to comply with this Agreement, it is highly likely that it will be terminated or suspended. Mr Speaker, let me just give you an illustrative example.

In 2016, the MCC issued a statement to the government of the Gambia after they noticed that the country has engaged in a pattern of actions that are inconsistent with the selection criteria. Let me read Paragraph 4 of the Notice that MCC issued relating to the award that Gambia benefited from.

Mr Speaker, with your leave, it says, ‘*over the past six months, MCC has witnessed a troubling pattern of policy slippage by the government of the Gambia that is inconsistent with the MCA selection criteria. The third party institutions that collect the indicator data and used the MCC eligibility criteria have documented evidence of growing human rights abuses, increase restriction on political rights, civil liberty and press freedom, as well as deteriorating economic policy and anti-corruption efforts. This erosion of commitment and performance has resulted in the declines on two indicators already reported; political rights and trade policy. In addition, plenary data suggests pending degradation of the Gambia’s performance on the six additional indicators in the future fiscal year’.*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this was issued when MCC terminated their Grant in Gambia just because, when Yayah Jameh came into office, there was a decline in Human Rights, there was a decline in Political Freedoms; people were strangulated, Journalists arrested and the Opposition pressurized. So MCC had to terminate their sponsorship. That is why I said as Sierra Leoneans, for the sake of our one and only country, we should ensure that we comply strictly with the conditions that are stipulated in this Agreement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have read where it is clearly written that the Agreement for National Unity and Recommendations from the Tripartite must be fully implemented. I insist again on the words ***fully implemented***. Now let me just take you through a horizon to a strange idea and experience. This is because; sometimes the human mind ought to be diverted and better returned to its thinking.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me go to some of the Resolutions among eight Resolutions that were agreed upon over six months ago in the Agreement for National Unity. We cannot say we want good things when we are not poised to comply with the good we want. That is why we said the Opposition has a responsibility, and similarly, Government has a responsibility, and we should all be seen doing our bits for the sake of our country, if only we love our country. Now it is clear here, let me go to Resolution 4[a] which says, '*we should ensure the release of any persons arrested, detained and or in prison for alleged elections and Civil Protests*'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would all agree with me that it was broadcast on National Television when the Chief Minister of our own State went to Pujehun and paid for criminals who have been sentenced to be released, and they were all released. But up till now, Resolution 4 which says that people arrested for Election Related Offences and Civil Protests should be released, APC has submitted a list and up till now the party cannot see one person who has been released. The Government has that onus or responsibility. If you can pay for criminals, why not release Opposition supporters who were arrested during elections or who were arrested during civil protest? This is government's own responsibility. Government has a role to play, and government should ensure that they conform to their roles and responsibilities For your information, Government presented the list, and most of those whose names are on the list are still in prison. *[Undertones]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on. Honourable Members, this is not a matter for argument. Please, let us allow the Leader of the Opposition. This is not a matter for undertone or for any argument. Allow the Leader of the Opposition to debate. Please, proceed.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, you see, when we have debates of this nature, the best way we can reduce the cacophony of noise is when Members have the opportunity to say what they want to say. But a good number of Members do not say what they want to say when they have the opportunity, but they want to give undertones.

Honourable Members, I am saying this because of our country, Sierra Leone. If you dig my heart, you would realize that I do not want anything that will disturb the support or grant from the United States Government.

So Mr Speaker, Parliament has a responsibility to ensure that we attract the attention of Central Government to see what has delayed the implementation of Resolution 4.

Resolution 4 states the '*discontinuation of politically motivated Court cases against the Opposition*'. Since this Agreement was signed, we have spent more than six months and no single politically motivated court case has been discontinued. So we have a responsibility as a Government.

Resolution 4[c] on the other hand says, '*support the resettlement of political party supporters, internally or externally displaced due to political intimidation, attacks or harassment*'. Mr Speaker, I know Opposition Supporters whose houses were burnt down in Bo town. Mohammed Moriba has not got where to sleep. Party Offices were burnt down, and in this Agreement for National Unity, the Government signed that they would support the resettlement of these people, and it has been also attached as a condition to the MCC Grant. So we should try to the best of our ability to make sure that we comply with it, Sir. And also, Resolution 4[d] says, '*upon assumption of their elective governance positions, all elected APC Officials, Mayors, Chairpersons will have their enumerations; their backlogs*'. This was signed by the Government of Sierra Leone without recourse to the implications, and without recourse to anything. And whatsoever Government signed, the Government must be committed to its full implementation, especially when it has been clearly stated in the Agreement for National Unity and on the MCC Press Release that the Government should ensure the full implementation of the Agreement of National Unity and the Recommendations of the Tripartite Committee. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in Krio, we say, S.O 2, '*way you tok pan di dog, nor*

*forget for tok pan di bone*'. To get the MCC is not a free cake; Government has responsibility, the Opposition has responsibility and everybody has responsibility. I have said this because, remember, when Honourable Barrie was interrupted, I did say that in 2014 President Koroma had the MCC threshold which was **\$44.4Mln**. And remember, when you have the Grant for MCC, you have 18 months preparatory period before ever they begin to disburse the money. The MCC threshold that was awarded in 2014 was completed on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2021. So that clearly tells you that MCC does not take into consideration the Government that is in power; they do it for the country and the people in that country. So, even when Government changes hands, MCC remains as MCC, and they remain committed to the implementation of their Grant. That is why I am saying that we on this side, because of the love we have for this country, we have supported government fully to ensure that that money comes to Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I have said, in life, it is give and take; you cannot have everything at the same time. I know from all political shades, we have extremists all over. Even when I was reechoing some of the Agreements Government has gone into, including the Tripartite Recommendations and the Agreement for National Unity, there were innuendos or undertones. Those undertones would have come from the extremists. Let us not follow the extremists in our Political Parties at the expense of the development of our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was recently in Togo together with Honourable Saa Emerson Lamina. And during our stay in Togo, electricity did not even blink, not even in the Hotel and the entire community. Because I am an Engineer and I believe in empirical proof, I spoke with the authorities and they said even though they have Generators, they never put on their Generators since the day we entered and left Togo. Ask Honourable Emerson, he would confirm to you that indeed I asked the authorities about that. Mr Speaker, Sierra Leone will gain if we have stable electricity, and one of the conditions for us to have stable electricity is for SLPP and APC to work together for the betterment of this nation. I know there are people from both sides who are intoxicated, who go into amnesia just because of power. We have them in APC, we

have them in SLPP, and we even have them in Parliament. From the undertones, you can tell that yes, they are drunken by power. Because they have power, they think they have the whole world, they think they have everything, and they are right in everything. But for the sake of our one and only country, we have to give and take. If we can go and pay for the release of criminals who have been indicted by law and convicted, let us ensure that we do the same thing for Opposition members who are arrested during elections.

Recently, I and Honourable Aaron Aruna Koroma went to Magburaka where we have eight supporters of the Opposition who were arrested on Election Day. Until now they are attending Courts, regardless of the fact that we signed this Agreement over six months ago; close to one year, yes. So Mr Speaker, we do not have to listen to the extremists in our political parties. Our nation should benefit, and for our nation to benefit, we have to give and take. Like I said, we on this side want Sierra Leone to benefit from this MCC. Once we settle electricity, if another government comes, we will look for another thing. We have a lot of things to settle in our country. We cannot be grappling just with electricity, electricity, electricity. So if there is an opportunity now for us to do away with electricity, we have to focus on another thing when the need arises. Again, my Deputy asked whether MCC can be re-awarded to a country. I would say yes, once the country meets the eligibility criteria, they can award them again and again. So this should be a lesson. To me, I do not think it is those people who should come here and tell us to be together, or to love ourselves, or tell us to work as a team in order to move forward. We should be able to accept that Mr Speaker is from Bonthe and I am from Port Loko but we all sat, and our shadows darken the walls of Fourah Bay College; we went to University. In fact Mr Speaker, some people are from Bo, Kenema, and myself, Honourable Abdul Kargbo, I am from Port Loko. We are members of the Auradicals' Club; we joined the same entity, so why the political divide? Why the divide? Some people are so malicious that all they want to see from you as an Opposition today is your Funeral. That is how we have extremists on both sides of the aisle. So let us try, even if not for the money or for MCC, but for the sake of humanity and the sake of morality, let us work together as a team, I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition. Leader of Government Business, you have the Floor.

**HON BASHIRU SILIKE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to begin by thanking the Minister of Finance for presenting this document to us. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank His Excellency the President for putting together a very strong team of Sierra Leoneans, led by the Honourable Vice President to convince the MCC and the people of America to award us this Grant. I want to thank the people of the United States and the MCC for approving this **\$480MIn** Grants to the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank in entirety the Government of Sierra Leone for working together; putting their ideas together, traveling back and forth, and today we are here approving the MCC. I also want to thank the Opposition for their role. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a period we invited the Opposition Leader to join the Chief Minister and the Leader of the Majority Party of this House to go to Washington and lobby the people of America to see reason to approve this Agreement. Unfortunately, the Leader of the Opposition refused to attend that meeting. The fact that he was invited demonstrated a good will from the Government of Sierra Leone, and by extension, His Excellency the President, Julius Maada Bio,

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Leader of Government Business, you know I had warned; Leader of Government Business please be guided.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, let me just address that. Mr Speaker, remember, it was a requirement for each Political Party to present nine people from each side to represent their Political parties in the Agreement for National Unity. I was there myself because I was appointed by my party but unfortunately he was not appointed by his party. But again, I witnessed where they were signing after that Agreement, Political Prisoners were to be released, and politically motivated cases were to be dropped. It was said that after that Agreement, all the backlogs of those members who had not

been in government were to be paid, and deliberately that agreement was not honored. How do you expect a sane man like me to join a team who had refused to comply with the Agreement?

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright, Honourable. Honourable Leader of Government Business please be guided.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I would be guided. I still want to thank the Leader again. Mr Speaker, I am the Deputy Leader of Government Business. There is no way I can represent whilst my boss, the Leader of Government Business was part of that team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the previous Government that was in power in 2014. I said before now that I was in this Parliament when we qualified for the threshold. Governance is continuity, they tried their best. Since the inception of the MCC in 2014, we tried as a government, and as a developing nation to attract the MCC to support us. The previous government tried but they failed in many cases, and we are able to achieve the threshold, thank you very much.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we took over as a government we promised Good Governance and we promised to fight against Corruption. And because of that, Mr Speaker, for five consecutive years we have been scoring the highest points in the fight of Corruption, and that is the more reason the MCC was approved.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, when we took over, the fight against Corruption was **45-46%** but today, consecutively we have scored above **70 to 80%**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Leader of the Opposition was talking about Tripartite and the things that we should have done before now, but I am of the strongest conviction that the MCC did due diligence. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is true that we participated in the Tripartite. We won the elections, but because we listened to the Opposition, we participated in the tripartite process. We signed Agreements and we have stood by all the Agreements covered by law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we wanted to know those that have been arrested because of political reasons and we asked the Opposition to present us with their names. Mr Speaker, bulk of the names that were presented were people who took part

in the November 26 Coup attempt. I can say that with no iota of doubt; the Leader of the Opposition knows about that, and we have the list to show that bulk of the names that were presented as internally or externally displaced, or are under arrested were partakers of the November 26 Coup plot.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker. Mr Leader, let me just answer you.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, hold on, hold on, Honourable Leader. Honourable Members, you know, from the very outset of this debate, I said Honourable Members should help me; I do not want this debate to go political.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** It will not go political, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, no, Leader of Government Business, this is your document, this is actually your document. It is for you to pamper the other side.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, I am in no way politicizing this document. The Opposition Leader said we still have not complied with the provisions of the Agreement.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, let me just give you a clarification, Sir. I was in the party office when we put together a Committee whose responsibility was to submit the names. The party submitted the names; I have just stated eight boys who are still undergoing trials in Magburaka. Let us assume out of 400 names, 395 were part of the coup as you are alluding. What about the five, who were not part of the coup, can't you release them? Is that a sufficient excuse to keep the Opposition at bay, and at the same time you want to work with the Opposition? Do you think the Opposition is just a tool to be dancing with the Government like a pendulum? Not under our watch!

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright, it is alright. Honourable Leader of Government Business, please manage the situation.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, I will never politicize this debate. I am just trying to clarify and put the facts on the table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, let me tell you why the argument here is important. Even the Americans would want to know how united we are in accepting this document. That is why I do not want any kind of argument on this document.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank Members of Parliament who have contributed to this debate. This is a fine document; it is not contentious and it is good for Sierra Leone. Mr Speaker, we are spending a huge sum of the **\$480MIn** on Energy distribution and transmission. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I noticed some Members of Parliament were saying if we spend all the moneys on transmission and distribution, what would be left for generation?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a public secret that we had huge pledges from the Vienna Convention that will go towards the generation and development of Bumbuna. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is expected that when these pledges are honoured, we would be able to develop Bumbuna to generate 210 Megawatts for the people of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the Dodo Project that will be developed from 6 Megawatts to 12 Megawatts. Mr Speaker, let us not forget that this MCC project is a five year rollover project. And within those five years, with all the funding and pledges that have been made to the energy sector, we would be able to generate enough energy. So what will be left to handle is just the transmission and distribution. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today we are generating electricity but our major challenge is Transmission and Distribution. So, I want to thank Dr. Yumkella and his team, including President Bio who is acting as the Minister of Energy and his team for sourcing these resources. And we hope these resources will be used for their intended purposes.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, this Agreement, when passed by this Honorable Parliament, we would encourage the Committee on Energy and the Leadership of this House to continuously provide oversight on this service. It has been said and clear that monies meant for the MCC, when ones they are used for other purposes, they should be refunded with interest. So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should not just leave this in the hands of the Executive. We are the people's representatives in this Parliament, and especially the Committee responsible for Energy. During his submission, one Member of the Parliament said that we should have strong Members in

that Committee in this session, and we should ensure that the Committee provides continuous support and oversight in order to achieve the aim of the project.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when once we get the transmission and generation right, and moneys are available to develop Bumbuna, Dodo and other Hydros, Mr Speaker, trust me, five years down the line our brothers will continue to be where they are.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Energy is the source of all levels of development. Even in our homes, to generate electricity individually is extremely very expensive. But when we have cheaper electricity provided by this Compact, including other monies that will be coming, we believe Sierra Leone will move to another level. So Mr Minister, you have listened to the concerns of Honourable Members on both sides.

Of course, on the issues raised about the Tripartite and others areas, I would encourage the Government to continue with what they have started. As a Government, and as a Party in power, we would definitely want free and fair elections; we would not want elections that will be marred with discrepancies. And moreover, we are listening Government and that is why we are listening to them. And whatever their concerns are, we hope they will not use this MCC as a thrum card to make things very difficult for Governments. We are all in this together; this is one country, one people. We are just here using APC and SLPP as Political Parties but we are one country, and we are one, people. Like Honourable Abdul Kargbo rightly said, he went to the University with people from Bo and Kenema, they joined the same fraternity, and at a point they might have even believed in their University fraternity more than the fraternity of Sierra Leone. But what we should really believe in is the fraternity that brings us together; the Sierra Leone fraternity. When we were in the University, somebody said these university fraternities are what we must just take to our political parties because the oaths we take in those fraternities are so strong that we mortgage ...*[Interrupted]*

**HON. ABDUL; KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, one Minute, please.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Leader.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Unlike usually when I used to go against you, now I am supporting you. You know, at Fourah Bay College, even the current Deputy Minister

was my Minister of Sports when I served as President for Fourah College. So regardless of his party, regardless of my party, we were one people because we went to Fourah Bay College together, and that is the spirit we should continue to hold.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Thank you very much, Leader. So, the Sierra Leone People's Party we have today is a party that believes in the mantra of '*One Country and One People*'. And like the Honourable Abdul Kargbo has said, we are, and he believes we are in one country and we are one people *[laughter]*.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us all as Sierra Leoneans, as Members of Parliament, as people born in Sierra Leone, our brothers in diaspora, let us all come together and support the MCC. It would be of no good if we fail or we default and the Americans decide to say they are withdrawing their monies. So, I implore the APC, the SLPP, the Paramount Chiefs, all Sierra Leoneans, the Committee responsible for Energy, and the Leadership of this Parliament to not just leave this in the hands of the Energy Ministry or the Ministry of Finance. Let us all come together and give the MCC the maximum support they should enjoy so that in five years' time, we would be able to think about doing massive development in other sectors without struggling with energy, generation and distribution. Thank you very much, Honourable Members, I thank you the Opposition. That is the spirit. We should come here with our divergence views, but at the end of the day, we should think Sierra Leone and we should know we are all one country and we are one people, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Leader of Government Business. Honorable Minister, proceed.

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE** *[Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura]*: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to appreciate the depth of the debate. Frank talk, frank guidance, and the guidance are well noted. Let me start off by actually appreciating the visionary leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. I say so because when the constraint analysis were done for Compact, he needed no convincing on the list provided that indeed, tackling energy is

the most binding constraint. So he asked that we focus the entirety of the Compact resources to foundational investment in the infrastructure in the energy sector. And I really want to thank the US Government and its people for according us Grant resources that we believe is the largest per-capita support from MCC to any country that they have been giving this support to.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, certainly it is a vote of confidence for the fact that it is the work that we have been doing as a nation. It is the assessment across diverse indicators, where we are compared to other countries, and I believe is an independent combination of assessment of different level of efforts that are made at economic, political, governance and social reforms that we are doing. And the trajectory, I believe, is on a continuum, but we are on an upper trajectory. So that assessment, I think, is something we must all as a nation really embrace and tap ourselves for. Nations are not built in a day, they are built over time. So results, we must all embrace when we acknowledge ourselves.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to appreciate the MCC team internationally in the US, and those particularly working on Sierra Leone and the Government Compact team that was set up, led by the Vice President. I think they did a very excellent job in weaving through very complex engagements in getting us to this part. I believe Parliament has been magnanimous in the debate. I think the debate has been way at the center of carrying the interest of development of this country. I did not get any sense of any division in my view. I thought it is basically calling for our responsibility to what we have signed for. That is what I heard coming out, and responsibility across different entities of government, not only the implementing entities, which will be the Executive and the respective arm that will be set up, but also the role and responsibility of the Parliament in ensuring that once this Agreement is ratified here by this Honourable House, we do the needful to ensure that it is executed to deliver fully, given the conditions under the termination clauses.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are discussions around the Compact eligibility. It is a continuous conditionality for you to continue to get access to compact. You must pass the scorecard continuously on annual assessments while you are in the compact,

you must ensure that you imbibe a greater value system of the American Government whose taxpayers resources are going to be accorded to us as a Grant. And that is the democratic credential. And within that, all those Agreements that have been signed, we as a government have committed, and we are responsible enough to ensure that we abide by them. And I think I take that frankly as an advisor that has actually emerged from the debates in the House. And so, I think we all understand what the Compact scorecards are, which are in the first set of goals and objectives of the Agreement itself, clearly set out there to promote economic freedom. And here we are touching on all these macroeconomic indicators; ensuring that you have continuous World Bank IMF Programs, regulatory equality in the country, your trade policies, what you do on Gender Equality, what you do on Land Rights, laws passed by this Parliament, we passed the GEWE Act, Access to Credit, employment promotion, and also ruling justly. We are committed to that as a country and as a government, and we will ensure that we improve on government effectiveness by rule of law, ensuring that multi-party democracy, multi-tier elections are held when they are supposed to be held, there is Freedom of Information, and the Libel Laws that were actually repealed in the House here. Then also investing in people, thereby ensuring that our investments that are approved or appropriated by the Honorable House are done in a way that health care, education, effective management of our natural resources, focus on child health, all of those are done in a way that are consistent. And that is the commitment that we have made as a government by signing the Compact. And in the discussions, passionate enough, I did say, and Members actually said, the focus has been on transmission and distribution, but less so of generation. I think there is a formidable reason for this. Let me just say this, the investment in transmission and distribution is a foundational investment. If you go around the country, what we are doing is, we are building the backbone for sustainable electricity investment. So when you get a transmission, you create a triangular loop with distribution centers such that power can drop in growth polls in this country, and then you would be able to ensure that that investment drives economic activities across the space.

But more important, let me share why Generation. Mr Speaker, we should not worry too much about Generation because there is a lot of Generation Investments that are in the pipeline which we have to just actualize. And I think in the debate, many speakers have alluded to that. It is not only the total of **227**Megawatt that we currently have installed and being utilized, but also those that we have signed, ratified by this House, and for which financial closures have been reached. And for those that are already there, you have Kar Power Ship, Serengeti, Planet Solar, CI Energy and Bumbuna hydro, all of these are giving us **227**Megawatts of power right now.

There are those that have been ratified in the House that have to do with SEWEH Energy in Magburaka that has a Runoff River Hydro Power of **27** Megawatt, Bumbuna Hydro which has a potential for **143** Megawatts additional power to come; that is Bumbuna Power 2, and then Newton Smart Energy, that is the grid connection for solar of **15** Megawatts. Also, the Newton Lungi under the Respite Project will give us **40** Megawatts additional. All of that is an expected **225** Megawatts of power in the pipeline. But additional ones for which there are ongoing works that we are awaiting Parliamentary ratification for two important ones that will support both Lungi and also Freetown Peninsula, a total of **80** Megawatts. Now, when you add all of that, is more than **500** Megawatts of power. In the outer year where MOUs have been signed, and we are working very hard to increase generation capacity. We have a total of **647** Megawatts of power that are currently under development. Now, when you add all of that, it is about **1000Mwt**, close to a Gigawatt of power in the pipeline. So the problem is not generation, the problem is to de-risk the sector such that this Generation capacity can actually be reproduced and being offtake, but pushed into a grid that is solid enough to accommodate it. If you do not do the grid and you produce enough power, you will have power that is wasted.

So, what you need to do first is to build that backbone; it is not the reverse kind of argument. You build the backbone such that that backbone can be pushed and then energy business can be a business for profit. That is the whole issue here, and the responsibility for the risking rests on the Government. It is not easy for you to go and invest in distribution capabilities or transmission capabilities. It is the government that

does it. The business for others to come in, like the private sector, is in the Generation space, but they have to have business for them to bring their money. So that is the way we have actually thought through this.

And so, I want to rest assure the House that the Generation capabilities are underway, and they are all trying and tracked along the lines of the delivery of the Transmission Project. But importantly, it is about even the sources. For those that are waiting for financial close, I think you all alluded to mobilization of resources in Vienna. They are all going to be pushed towards this. We are currently in discussions, His Excellency met the World Bank President, and there is a Mission of **\$300MIn** at the World Bank and the African Development Bank. They are trying to mobilize both multilateral resources, but blend with private capital to support countries to increase access to power, especially in the Generation space for Renewable Energy.

In the Compact, there is what they call the Millennium Impact Investment Accelerator. That component of the Compact is to ensure that we do studies here, and develop projects that are bankable for generation. That is really the whole essence here, and they will provide both transactional advisors for us, and also project designers; those who develop those projects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was also a concern about allocation of resources. The resources are going to be put into core infrastructure, but also building the capacity of the utilities. The core infrastructure takes **80%** of the core resources. That is how this program is structured. In hardcore transmission, but also dispatch centers and distribution infrastructure, and then you build the capacity of the entities, both in terms of manpower and having correct people who are there to ensure that we are able to deliver efficiently and effectively. So that is the way it is.

There was a talk also about implementation plan. I must say, expediency is very important here. We have to deliver in time because the utilization of these resources is time bound. You have two years to go into the '*pre entering into force period*'. And upon ratification, resources will be released for us to be able to ensure that we do everything required as conditions precedent to go into '*entry into force*'. Once we enter into force, it is five years utilization of the resources, which is the core investment. Now

according to the project design, we must ensure that we provide the needed capacity support to the implementing entity or the Cooperation Agency that will be in Sierra Leone, its Governing Board and the MCC as well so as to deliver on time.

So, it is everybody's responsibility to ensure that we do not renege on timelines to deliver in this entire project.

As a question around whether there would be another compact, well, the way the Millennium Challenge works, I would say yes, there is. But the Compact we would go for will be a Regional Compact. So what they are doing is, in fact they have approved, I think a Regional Compact for Cote d'Ivoire. And we believe, in my discussions with them when I went for the signing of this Compact, I sat in their Advisory Council where they were discussing modalities of expanding, or us even having a second Compact once we do this properly. We can start discussion around eligibility for a Regional Compact once we get this one going on. So, there will be a second Compact that is possible for Sierra Leone, with our neighboring countries that can be far much bigger than what we have right now once they have done the kind of finding constraints for regional integration potential opportunities.

So it is there, we must do it and ensure that this is properly done.

As for the issues around the termination clause, I think they are standard clauses, when you sign you sign on conditions and you must ensure that you adhere to those conditions, not to fall into the trap that have been set in all of those termination clauses.

On the area dealing with issues around budget allocation, you know, in our Budget that we are preparing, we have taken into consideration all of those issues that we have committed to MCC and the like. So, I really just want to appreciate the quality of the debates, and I think I saw clear focus on national development and full embrace of what is going to make this country develop from both sides of the aisle.

And on that note, Mister Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that the Honorable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 2024:

1. THE MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE COMPACT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

2. THE PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Minister of Finance. Before I put the Question, Honourable Members, may I recognize the presence of certain dignitaries that we have here.

Starting with, Mr Conrade Saki, the Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. You are welcome to the House of Parliament.

Mr Joseph Sunday Sillah, he is the Chief Director, Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs.

Mr Boakai Bindu Hindowa, he is the Deputy Minister of Gender and Children's Affairs. You are welcome in the House of Parliament.

Mrs Aminata Y. Sannoh, she is the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs.

Madam Joyce B. Kamara, she is the Director of Children's Affairs.

Madam Joyce Tejan Kella, she is the Commissioner National Commission for Children. You are welcome.

Mr Bashiru Tula , Laura Koroma, Daniel A Gbao, Mr Nazar M. Kebbie, David Lamin of UNICEF, Ibrahim Kamara, and Samuel A.B. Momoh, the Principal Deputy Financial Secretary, you are all welcome, and thank you very much.

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The Government motion by the Minister of Finance has been ratified]*

*The House stood down for 30 minutes at 2:20pm And resumed at 2:55pm.*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, can we proceed?

#### **IV. BILL**

THE CHILD RIGHTS ACT, 2024

**INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING- THE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS [Dr Isata Mahoi]:**

*SUSPENSION OF S.O 5[2]*

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS [Dr. Isata Mahoi]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled; the Child Rights Act, 2024 be read the first time

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The Bill entitled; the Child Rights Act, 2024 has been read the first time]*

**SECOND READING**

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled; the Child Rights Act, 2024 be read the second time.

Right Honourable Speaker of Parliament, Honourable Members, let me at the outset thank all Honourable Members of Parliament here today for making time to debate and pass the Bill entitled; the Child Rights Bill, 2024 into law. The Government of Sierra Leone signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child without reservation. The Government of Sierra Leone signed and ratified the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child without reservation. The Government of Sierra Leone signed and ratified the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights of Women in Africa, aka Maputo Protocol without a reservation. The Child Rights Bill, 2024 has responded to most of these, including observations made by the Committee of Experts on the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Child Rights Bill, 2024 seeks to repeal and replace the Child Rights Act, 2007, to make provisions for the promotion of rights and responsibilities, and to meet our obligations as it relates to International and Regional

Instruments. The Medium Term National Development Plan, 2024 to 2030 commits to the review of the Child Rights Act, 2007, and to ensure the protection and promotion of the rights of children, while at the same time ensuring responsibilities of the child parents, State and other actors. The Child Rights Bill, 2024 has been approved by Cabinet, and I am here at the behest of this Honourable House of Parliament to present and appeal that this Bill be approved to pass into law.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, the purpose of this Bill is to repeal and replace the Child Rights Act, 2007, Act **No.7** of 2007; to make provision for the promotion of the rights and responsibilities of children, and the obligation of the State to provide for such rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children to provide for other related matters. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, this Bill is divided into 14 Parts. Let me in a summary present these 14 Parts to you.

**PART 1, *Preliminary:*** This makes provision for the interpretation and definition of the words used throughout the Bill.

**PART 2, *Rights and responsibilities of children and the responsibility of the State:*** This provides for the definition and verification of age of a child and other rights of a child, The minimum age of marriage and the rights to refuse betrothal or marriage, recruitment into the Armed Forces, and also outlines the responsibilities of a child, parents and the State.

**PART 3, *Guiding principles on the implementation of the rights of the child:*** This provides a list of the Child Rights Guiding Principles, including the best interest of the child, non-discrimination, respect for the child's opinion and view and equal treatment.

**PART 4, *Protection from abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect:*** This provides for protection of the child from all forms of physical violence, psychological and

emotional abuse, sexual violence, early or forced marriage and betrothal, harmful practices, neglect, child trafficking, exploitative child labor and cyber-attack.

PART 5, ***Employment of the child:*** This makes provision for the minimum age for full time employment, the prohibition of child labor, apprenticeship, registration of children in industrial, undertaking and resolution of disputes.

PART 6, ***The Child justice:*** This deals with the establishment and function of child panels, Juvenile Court and Family Court.

PART 7, ***Children in need of special care and protection:*** This deals with care, order and supervision under order of family courts, duties of Social Workers, social services and Protection Officers and discharge of orders.

PART 8, ***Parentage, parental responsibilities, care, custody and access:*** This contains provisions relating to parental rights, duties and responsibilities.

PART 9, ***Alternative care, adoption and daycare:*** This states the guiding principles for the provision of alternative care guidance for fosterage of child, adoption, residential care for home children, and the inspection of daycare centers.

PART 10, ***The National Commission for children:*** This deals with the establishment of the Commission and proceedings of the Commission.

PART 11, ***Function and powers of the Commission:*** this outlines the functions and the powers of the Commission.

PART 12, ***Administrative provisions:*** This deals with the Secretariat of the Commission, appointment and function of the Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive secretary and other employees of the Commission.

PART 13, ***Funds for the Commission:*** This deals with the funds of the Commission.

PART 14, ***Decentralization, Local Councils and World Welfare Committees:***

PART 15, ***Miscellaneous:*** This provides for the power to make regulations, repeal and also savings.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled; The Child Rights Act, 2024 be read the second time.

*[QUESTION PROPOSED]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, I am taking two from either side of the aisle because I know, as a matter of fact that this Bill is going to be committed to the Legislative Committee for scrutiny. Yes, Honourable Members, or you want to make my job very easy? You want to move an application for it to be committed? Yes, please move an application.

**HON. VERONICA KADIE SESAY:** Mr Speaker, thank you. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in as much as this Bill gears up for the protection of our children, it is very much important. As I always say, without children, we are nowhere. Yesterday we started as children, and now we are adults. So, coming up with such a Bill, it is good for us to go into the nitty gritty of this Bill because it is our Bill. We are mothers, we are fathers, and we are here to defend and to protect the rights of our children. I was expecting, as stated by my sister, that the Paramount Chiefs would be here, including the initiators and whosoever concerned. So we are waiting to see Placards and people full in the Gallery in respect of this Bill. To be very sincere, we need to scrutinize this Bill properly on behalf of the people we are representing out there. Even as I am standing here, calls are coming from all over. It seems people are misinformed or they have misconstrued what this whole Bill is about. According to the Minister, consultations were done, but I would say we frown at those consultations because we are the voices of the voiceless; we are the voices of the people that we are representing out there. So, in talking about anything that has to do with cultural practices, I think it is but fitting for us to be present during such consultations. In as much as she said consultations were done with Paramount Chiefs and other stakeholders, as Honourable Members, we needed to have been included in those consultations so as to witness what they were

going to tell us. Again, she said there is a Memorandum of Understanding. I think that Memorandum of Understanding should have been communicated to Honourable Members, especially the female MPs but that was not done.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member. I told the Minister yesterday that her work was going to be extremely easy had she engaged the services of MPs, because it is only MPs that have the wherewithal to communicate with the people. There is no way you can be able to communicate with those people without the MPs. You should have easily called the MPs together and engage them. They would have gone to make your job very, very easy. I informed her yesterday, but proceed.

**HON. VERONICA KADIE SESAY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just like the recent Bill we passed here; '*the prohibition of early child marriage Bill*'. That Bill was well done. In as much as it was a Bill of the First Lady, she went down and engaged the Honourable Members, especially the Female Honourable Members. This is what we were expecting our sister to have done so that all of us could be on the same page. We do not want anyone to wrongly blame us tomorrow in case anything goes wrong, **S.0 2**, '*Na una all*'. So we had wanted that consultation, but it was not done. And even now, we were expecting those people that she said she consulted with to be here with their Placards, giving us applauses. Talking about Part 2 of this Bill, I think that is the bone of contention of the people. The people need to know what is in the Bill because the Bill is fine and it will protect our children [*Undertones*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we just cannot throw the Bill like that because there are some important things that we need to look at for the benefit of our children. That is why we want proper consultation and clarification on the Bill. We would not want to mortgage our culture because Culture is culture. We have our tradition and culture, and they also have their own tradition and culture. So if you want to do tangible something, I think it is but fitting for us to stand and talk and say what we feel like saying, or we go to our people that we are representing in the Sierra Leone. If we had been part of

the consultations, it would have been very easy and a simple sail with no gallops or speed bumps.

So with that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to move that *[Interrupted]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, please be guided. Yes, proceed. Sorry, hold on, Honourable Member. I wanted to hear from the Leadership from both sides.

**HON. VERONICA KADIE SESAY:** Okay, then I will stick a pin on this for us to listen to the Leaders, and maybe we put that to vote, thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, one from this side and one from the Ruling Bench and then we conclude. Yes, Honourable Daniel Koroma, you want to say something.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you Very much, Mr Speaker. I just rushed in because I was sent somewhere by my Leader on official assignments. Mr Speaker, I believe today's assignment ought to be not only a national assignment, but a patriotic assignment with the understanding that posterity is ahead of all of us- it is a pure national assignment.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Bill before us is entitled; the Child Rights Act, 2024. It deals only with the Rights of the child; no more, no less. Anything related to the right of the child is what is being addressed. Anything outside the box of a child, or the definition of child has nothing to do with this Bill. And of course, I participated at the Pre Legislative hearing yesterday, and we attempted to do some explanations as follows:

1. This Bill is purely a Child Rights Act and has nothing, or if it has anything to do with FGM, it ought not to do anything with FGM. If there is FGM there, it should be deleted completely. The object of this Bill is not FGM. If there is any law to address FGM, let the Bill come and then Parliament will decide. But this one is Child Rights Act, full stop. And there are contentious issues related to FGM inserted here which should be excluded completely.

One of such issues is the '**Definition of Harmful Practice**'. In fact in my opinion, to lay every matter to rest, there is no need for any definition of '*Harmful Practice*'. It should be deleted completely because it has wider implication; beyond the border implication of harmful practice. So in my opinion, we have nothing to do with what is harmful or what is not harmful.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the right of the child cannot be contentious. The issues we raised yesterday were legitimate. The Honourable from Western Area, Honourable Bah raised concerns about related laws because it deals with the age of child labour, the age of part time job for child, and the age of full time job for children. And we have employment law, so we need to ensure they sink together; there is no contradiction. The Bill deals with other Human Rights issues of which there are other laws related to Human Rights that must be aligned.

Also, the Bill deals with marriage issues, and you know through your Leadership, that we passed a landmark law here entitled; Prohibition of Child Marriage. So by addressing marital issue in this Child Rights Act, yes, it is fine because the more the merrier, it causes no harm, but it must be attuned with the relevant law; the existing law, especially the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act. So the main issue there is the modification of Clause 25. Clause 25 needs further explanation to all of us. Of course you know I am from Koinadugu, so when you talk about traditional practices, we are number one; we value our customs and traditions. So as far as we are concerned, this Bill has nothing to do with Customs and Traditional practices, especially FGM. What the Bill is saying here is similar to what the marital laws said and it is similar to other analogy which I mentioned yesterday, but I will limit it now to Martial law. Marriage is part of our Customs and Traditions, right? You are allowed to married if you so wish. My Chief Whip from Pujehun, are you not permitted to marry three wives now if you wish? You are allowed to married. You can even go up to four because I believe you are a Muslim. The only thing is that you have to wait a little until the child reaches the appropriate age before you go ahead to marry her. Does that prohibit Marriage? No, you can marry if you want, but wait until after the age of the child and go ahead. Does

that constitute Prohibition of Marriage? Well, that is the explanation of Clause 25. The Clause needs small modification but it does not prohibit FGM or any other Traditional Practices or any custom and tradition. It does not, and we cannot, and in fact, what I proposed yesterday is that to lay matter to rest, we can even include one clause to affirm that this country respects the Customs and Traditions of our people. If at all you want to perform any traditional rite of passage or ceremony or whatsoever that bothers on our customs and tradition, let it be done to somebody who knows what is being done to him or her, because if that aspect is not adhered to, then you might have committed a very serious Human Right issue, and there are penalties attached to that. As it is right now, one of the criteria for anyone to seek asylum right round the world is that you should not be part of the system that violates such rights; that rite of passage must not have been performed on you. That is one of the recent criteria that is haunting our citizens now. Let us say for instance, I am above fifty, but when I was five years, a rite of passage was performed on me. And then by coincidence, I happen to be a beneficiary of an asylum and I want to seek asylum in the U.S. If I appear before the Committee for interview and they find out that I have gone through the rite of passage, I will be automatically disqualified of the right to Asylum because of the rite of passage I went through when I was only five years old. For that reason, I may suffer a consequent for something that was performed on me without my knowledge or consent. Mr Speaker, that is the Human Right issue and there are so many other examples. So, I cannot stand here at this stage and say Rite of Passage by both genders should be criminalized. I can never say that, and over my dead body, it cannot happen here, although I am not the head of this Parliament; it is your discretion, Sir. Under **S.0 42**, you have the final say, but in mine own capacity I cannot allow it to happen. I will speak against it that the rite of passage should remain intact because it is part of our culture. The only thing is that let it be performed on someone who is aware of what is happening to him or her. Is that not fair enough? Does that incriminate Rite of Passage? Is marriage presently incriminated? It is not, but it was spearheaded by no lesser person but Her Excellency the First lady. She does not say nobody should marry when it is time to get married.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honorable Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Honorable Members, I am sure you clearly understand the train of thought of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The issues are so clear; I know as a matter of fact that you clearly understand what the issues are. The issue is not about banning it, it is about the age. That is what he is saying, and that is the agreement, proceed.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is why in my opening statement I said we do not only have to be true Sierra Leoneans, but let us beware of posterity. We are all aware of the situations on the ground. Can we for once beware of posterity? Let the rite be performed on you with your knowledge of what is happening to you. Let it be done based on your choice because it is allowed by law. If you do it, you will not be jailed or incriminated for that. So go ahead, mummy, go ahead, daddy, **S.O 2**, '*Enti you know say na dat good for you?*' Go for what is good for you, because the law does not stop you from going ahead.

Mr Speaker that is all I have to say because I do not want to bother you much. That is the singular point; there are so many other minor critical issues but this one is the most topical issue. I do not want to preempt, but I think maybe with the consent of the Leader, my Leader will comment on that as to whether it should be committed or not. That is not my role, because my Boss is here. The two Leaders will agree whether there is need for committal or not. My Duty is just to explain that our Customs and Traditional practices remain intact until further notice. But for now, it cannot be touched, thank you very much, Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, one on this side and then we are done [*Undertone*]. Are you concluding on behalf of the Leadership? No, no, I am not opening this to debate. If you conclude on behalf of the Leadership, we would move an application and we refer it to Committee. Let us not make the whole issue complex, so proceed on behalf of the Leadership. Chief Whip, you can get the permission of the Leader and you proceed.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say thank you to the Honourable Member from Kabala for speaking the minds of some of us. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me start by saying this Bill, if enacted will be a death trap for us in 2028, a serious political death trap. In the first place Mr Speaker, if we dare enact this Bill there will no more rite of passage, even male circumcision.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Chief Whip, do not be as plain as that. Hold on, please. Like I said, the Bill is not about elections, what I am saying is that let us refer the Bill to the Committee Stage where the stakeholders can go and have proper discussion on all the issues.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Then they should not have introduced it in the first place, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, the trend of your argument, be guided *[Applause]*.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, do you want me to finish? Mr Speaker I am rounding up.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please be guided.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Speaker said something which I beg to differ; that this Bill is not only about permission. This Bill is telling us that no more permits should be given to both male and female traditional society. It is there in section 25. All of us are traditional people, how can we sit here and allow such a Bill to go through like that? Mr Speaker, I was in my village yesterday and that was why I did not come for the Pre-Ledge.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, sorry Sir. May I observe Sir?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** What **S.Os** are you standing on?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Chief Whip. Proceed, Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, we are speaking to the public, and we are representing our people. Mr Speaker, I said in my statement that this issue is bothered around the children. Above children, there is nothing like permit or not permit. As long as you are of age, you can go ahead. Permission is only for those within the child bracket

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Chief Whip, the whole argument is simple. You know, Honourable Daniel Koroma tried to summarize what the issues really are. So please go down that line.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, thank you for guiding me. Mr Speaker, with all due respect to some of our appointees, some of them are taking Parliament as job for the boys *[Interrupted]*. Do you want to round off now? I can still sit and allow you to round off. Okay, go ahead.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Chief Whip, why are you troublesome today?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Deputy Leader of Government Business, my duty here is to protect Government Appointees. The Government Appointees are representatives of the president and we should mind our words when we address them. These are people the president has carefully selected from among the lots of Sierra Leoneans to help to achieve his agenda. So please we are not boys. By the Constitution we should not rely on opinions. We are so powerful, and the Constitution gives us so much responsibility that Ministers and other appointees are answerable to us. That is why when they are appointed they come to us for interview and approval. Therefore, we should not even insinuate that one, Honourable Chief Whip, please. And this is a Government Motion, so if you are rounding off on Government Motion you have to be careful, thank you.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you Mr Leader. Mr Speaker, the same way the president chose them carefully is the same way our people chose us carefully by voting for us to come here. Mr Speaker, the reason why I said that is because, for a Minister

to come to the House with this type of Bill without consulting us is not done  
*[Undertones].*

**THE SPEAKER:** Chief Whip, Chief Whip...Order! Order! Order! Yes, Leader, proceed.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Honourable Members, we are live on Air. No Minister will pioneer a Bill in this House without the approval of this House. When Documents are brought to this House, they become properties of this House. It is only the Business Committee that determines the document that is brought here. As Members of Parliament, it is our right and responsibility to critique documents, but critiquing the Ministers and blaming them for bringing documents here is not in place. They did not just bring the document here, it was this House that put that document on the Order Paper, it was this House that summoned its own Members of Parliament and it was this House that allowed the Minister to be seated and presented this document. We can say we do not want the document, so please Honourable Member, be guided. We should not debate with emotions.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Chief Whip, please be guided. Honorable Chief Whip, I know you are an angry man but please be guided

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Okay Mr Speaker, I will be guided. Mr Speaker, I was telling this House why I did not come yesterday; I had a meeting with my chiefs and few other traditional people, and they told me in no uncertain term I should give validation to this document. That is a message from my People, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, can somebody move an application for the referral? *[Undertone]* Leader, no, please, they have rounded up. The Leader gave opportunity to the Deputy to round off, and Honourable Dickson rounded off for you. So what are you saying? So move.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Okay, I am going to move, but before I move Mr Speaker, I want to assure the general public and this House that there is no Bill before us banning any Traditional Society. I want to make that extremely clear as Acting Leader

of this House. I know clearly that what is on this Bill is proposal for this House to look at. And the proposal says, nobody should be harmfully treated, including female genital mutilation, if you are a child. The document before us is not a law, it is a proposal before this House, and it states that if you are below the age of 18, you should not be initiated; you should not be harmfully treated in any form if you are below 18. The fact that it is a proposal before this House, the House would have to look at the proposal word by word, page by page, and making sure we do due diligence on it. We have not passed it into law, and we have not said we are going to pass it- it is a process. We have a very serious Committee on Legislative Affairs. We are going to commit it to them, and they will have to do the consultations and it will be brought back to us. We expect Members of Parliament to do due consultations before the Bill is brought to this House again.

So Mr Speaker, I do not want anybody to be misled that we are here to ban this or that society. We are not here to ban any traditional practices, and we would not even attempt to do that. So Mr Speaker, I want to make it extremely clear that we would not attempt it, and nobody, not even the Minister. Thankfully, this Minister is also coming from a traditional community, so she knows.

So please, Honourable Members, ladies and gentlemen, be aware that that is not what we are here for. So the messages that are going into our communities that we are planning to do this and that are not true and they should not be countenanced. With that, Mr Speaker, can you put the question so that I move the Motion?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, let me hear from the Minister. Yes, Minister, your response.

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I want to thank this House for the discussions that we graciously have. And I want to reaffirm my statement that this Bill is a Child Rights Bill, and the focus of this Bill is for us to look at those provisions that have to do with

anybody that is below the age of 18 years. To respond to some of the comments, I would like to say we are not here as a Ministry or as a Government to end cultural practices.

Mr Speaker, I want to assure you that there are misconceptions regarding the consultations as well. We held series of consultations, and I can attest to it that we had Paramount Chiefs and the Sowes present here today seated on the Gallery. And Mr Speaker, we went to every District and Chiefdom and we got Sowes from there. So we have had a memorandum of understanding. If this House would permit me, I can also read the memorandum of understanding we had in each district.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, no, don't. Give that to the Committee.

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to say that I am here on the command of your leadership and also the Members of Parliament. Whatever suggestions you may have, we are opened to discussions. And I want to assure you that the government also is there to protect the rights of children. This is our focus, and this is what we maintain, and this is what is in this Bill that is entitled; The Child Rights Bill of 2024.

On that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I move that the Bill entitled; The Child Rights Act, 2024 be read the second time.

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

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED TO]*

*[The Bill entitled; The Child Rights Act, 2024, being an Act to repeal and replace the Child Rights Act, 2007, Act No.7 of 2007, to make provisions for the promotion of the rights and responsibilities of Children, and the obligation of the state to provide for such rights as outlined in the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child, and the African Charter on the rights of the welfare of children, and to provide for other related matters has been read the second time]*

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make it clear that we have not passed anything into law, and this is a proposal. In that vein, I want to stand on **S.O 51** to commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee for proper scrutiny and to be brought to this House, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any Seconder?

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, I so second.

*[QUESTION PROPOSED, PUT AND AGREED]*

*[Motion by the Actual Leader of Government Business has been carried]*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**THE SPEAKER:** This is for the listening public. The Bill has been committed to the Legislative Committee for scrutiny by Members of Parliament and other stakeholders. Position papers are invited, and citizens generally that are interested in this particular Bill are hereby invited to sit with the Committee and look at the Bill so that we have a fine document that will come to Parliament eventually, thank you very much. Yes, Madam Minister, you may leave. Yes, there is another application to be done, you can proceed.

**HON. ABDUL M. CONTEH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think it is very important for people to understand exactly what the role of the Legislative Committee will be in such a scenario. This is a specific one, and I want to encourage all Honorable Members to attend because we are representatives of the people. We are also going to issue a Notice for Position Papers *[Undertones]*. Allow me to land, that is what we are going to do, I would confirm. So from now to that time, we also have the opportunity to engage our constituents. We would bring in the Paramount Chiefs, and we would bring in the Sowes. It is going to be a platform wherein we are going to engage one another beyond emotions. I want to

crave the indulgence of Honorable Members for us not to allow our emotions to overshadow our thoughtfulness. We have a fundamental question to answer if we are asked by our kids; '*what are you doing to protect us?*' We are not only going there as lawmakers, but we are also going there as parents. We are also going there as people who want to be judged on the right side of history. So please, Honourable Members, when the Notice comes out make sure that you attend so that we can pass this Bill into law that will stand the test of time, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on Honourable Members, what is wrong about starting the process tomorrow?

**HON. ABDUL M. CONTEH:** That is a very good suggestion, Mr Speaker.

**SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, order, order, order! What is wrong about starting the process tomorrow?

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, with the exception of the fact that we have this emergency sitting, our MPs are still on recess, and they still have their activity plans for the recess period. Any attempt to keep them here will be expensive. You see, we struggled with having Members coming here this morning. We are only here for a national call on the MCC. Had it not been for that we would not have been here.

**THE SPEAKER:** What if we decide to sort out the expenses?

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** We would decide to meet with the Speaker and arrange *[laughter]*. Am I speaking the minds of MPs?

**THE SPEAKER:** In any case, Leader of Government Business, do an Application.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, before the application, I would want the general public to know that this Bill has been committed. If you have any comments or suggestions, you can forward them to the Committee or to any Member of the Legislative Committee, or the Chairman or Clerk of the Legislative Committee, or you bring it directly to the Speaker's Office. When once the Committee sets a date which

would be announced for their meetings, the general public will be also invited to make an input. So the general public is also free to attend the Committee's meeting. And we are encouraging Members of Parliament to attend the Legislative Committee meeting when once the date is slated. We do not want a situation wherein the Committee might have met with the Ministry and stakeholders, and have arrived at a decision and Members come here and pretend not to know or understand what is happening. So we are encouraging Members of Parliament to participate with the Legislative Committee. We know this Bill is very close to our hearts, we know it hinges on our survival as Members of Parliament, so we should take it extremely serious with the thoughts that we are representatives of the people of Sierra Leone. With that, Mr Speaker, I want to move that we invoke Section **94** of the Constitution, which is to allow Parliament to regulate itself, and move that Parliament sits on Thursday the 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2024.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, can I refer this House to Section 89 [1] of the Constitution?

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, let me hear you. Honourable Members, order!

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Section 81 of the National Constitution gives the right to President to call Parliament at any time, and we are in recess, so he has to call us back if we should sit on Thursday. That is what the Constitution is saying. He only called us for today to look at the MCC, and that is what we have done. So if we have to come back, then we have to withdraw Section 89 [1] *[Applause]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leaders, approach me. Honourable Members, order. *[the two Leaders approached the Speaker]*

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The House rose at 3:45pm and was adjourned to Thursday the 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024 at 10:00am

