

OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

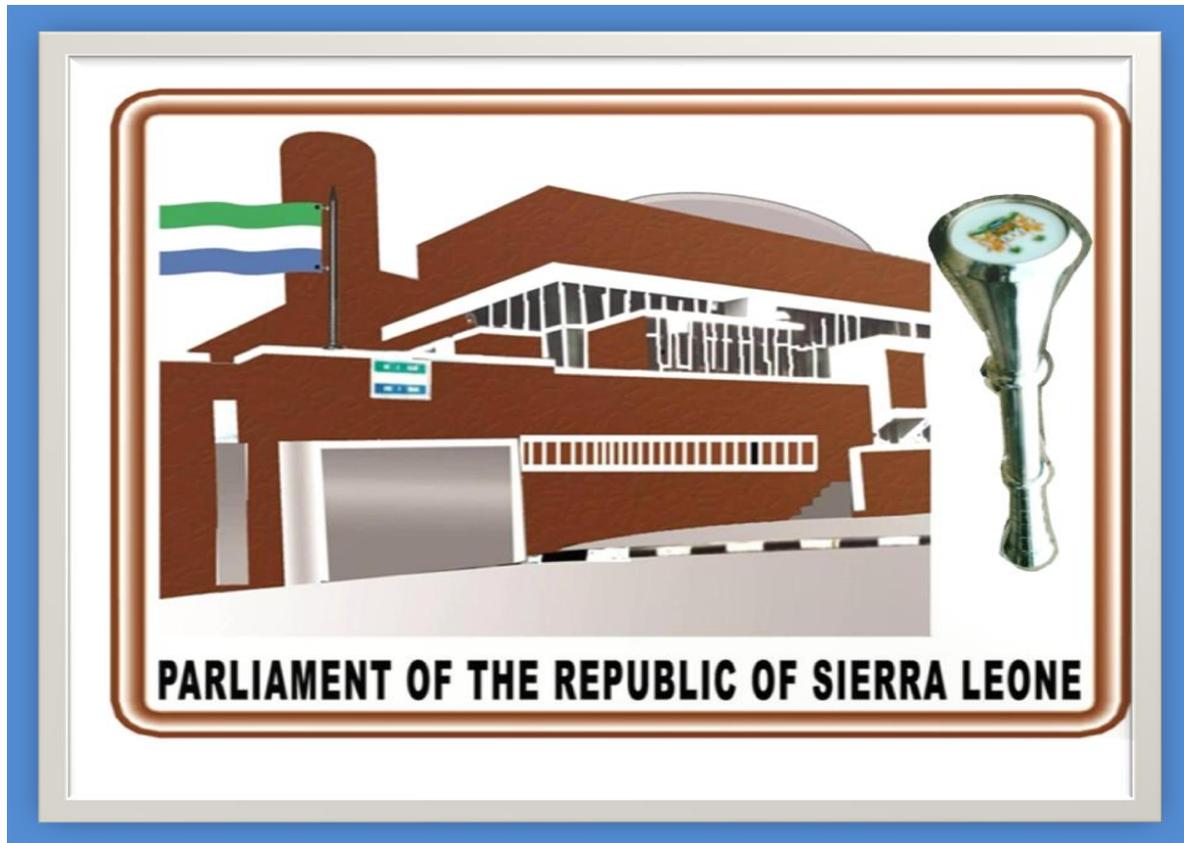
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FOURTH SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2022

SESSION – 2021/2022



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMEN TARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

NUMBER: 49

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
Held Tuesday, 15th March, 2022

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AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC SIERRA

SIERRA AND GRAFTON INVESTMENT (SL) LIMITED DATED DECEMBER 2021

THE MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 15th March, 2022.

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:00A.M. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown]

[The Speaker, Hon. Dr Chernor Abass Bundu, in the Chair]

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S. O. 5[2]

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we have two Bills to deal with at Committee Stage and I hope the matter in hand now is not going to attract too much controversies. I hope so because there are times when you can see something so anodyne and then it suddenly develops and graduates itself into a controversial issue. So in light of that, I plan to just take two Members from each side of the Aye and then conclude.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker that cannot be the procedure Sir. This is law making and we are deciding the future of this country including the unborn, we cannot treat with such levity.

THE SPEAKER: I am not dealing with it, or referring to the Bills. Because the Bills are going to take so much time, that is why I wanted us to deal with this one expeditiously, so we can spend more time on the Bills. So we agreed on two speakers from either side.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker that cannot be the procedure. This is law making and we are deciding the future of this country including the unborn. We cannot treat it with such levity.

THE SPEAKER: No, I said the first matter that we are going to be dealt with.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: The first matter no problem.

THE SPEAKER: I am not referring to the Bills.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: To the Committee Stage?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Bills are going to take so much time, that is why I wanted us to deal with this one expeditiously so we can spend more time on the Bills.

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Mr Speaker, I agreed.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, so we agreed on two speakers from either side. Thank you and let's proceed.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY

MADAM HAJA ISATA KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, be it resolved that, this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House, on Thursday, 10th March, 2022. The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Grafton Investment Sierra Leone Limited dated December, 2021.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Grafton Water Company is intended to provide financial incentives for the new company that has taken over the operations of the default Grafton Water Company thus, filling the vacuum that was created in the water industry. The new company will invest over Twenty Five Million Dollars to savage the disused infrastructure left behind by the old company and expand the production to include alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. The activities of the company will span within twenty four months and with the first twelve months committed to savaging the real infrastructure and to regenerate production. The transition to date has been smooth as the two partners have settled all outstanding obligations to personnel and customers. Personnel benefits have been settled while liabilities with customers have been cleared. This has created decorum and stability for the new company that has taken over. The transfer of the assets and liabilities of the disused Grafton Industry to another company was a big relief to Government due to the uncertainties that were created in the market for purified water, as Grafton has become a brand name in Sierra Leone. This uncertainty causes shortages of purified water with the resultant increase in prices. It also created uncertainties for employees who were directly hired by the default company and customers who were involved in the distribution of value change. Hence, the transition from Grafton Water Company to Grafton Investment Company is therefore, a welcome development. With the ushering of the new investment, the water industry especially in the Western Area will soon again response to growing market demands and trigger

competitions among producers which will enhance consumer preferences. With full production capacity, Grafton Investment Company will absorb previous employees from Grafton Water Company where their expertise is required. This is in addition to more job opportunities that will be created for its expansion which will include new products. The nascent product will accrue alternative preferences to consumer in the beverage industry. As the new company expands production, it will provide market access to farmers especially producers of fruits that will now be reprocessed into juice and non-alcoholic beverages.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, additionally, the expansion of the company's activity will save Government the burden of providing foreign exchange for the importation of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages as well as, serving as a source of revenue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, it is resolved that, this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreement which was laid on the Table on Thursday, 10th March, 2022. That is, the Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and Grafton Investment Sierra Leone limited dated on 20th December, 2021.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Madam Deputy Minister for your presentation. We must acknowledge her. This is her very first appearance in the Well of the House [Applause]. We wish her well.

[Question Put and Agreed To]

HON. CHARLES OSMAN ADBULAI: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement before us this morning as it was read by the Deputy Minister of Trade, let me use the Parliamentary terms to say, it is not controversial but a welcome news for Sierra Leoneans and the Government of Sierra Leone. The Grafton Water Company has been a household name in this country. So to hear that they went into liquidity was very worried for us as a nation and as a Government. When the other news came that another company has taken over its assets, and to inject into that business with the sum of Twenty Five Million Dollars, it is good news for us as a country. We know when companies or institutions go into liquidity, the impart it will create on the nation, the

Government and the citizens in terms of employment, and in terms of what the Government receives as taxes. Therefore, this Agreement that was read by the Deputy Minister and from the Agreement that is before us, there is a lot of benefits as indicated by the articles. I will not go into details because; the copies were given to Members of Parliament for a week now. So everybody is liable to read it by themselves. Just few highlights on the benefits, of course, the company is going to get protection from the Government against foreign unhealthy competitions. This company is like a baby in this country, so the Government needs to protect it. Looking at the content policy of course, it is a legal provision in this country. Therefore, the company is going to have protection from the Government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, also, the company will have a right to buy its raw materials and have agents that will buy its raw materials, doing some marketing process within and outside of this country. The taxes as we have said, the Government is going to benefit from that. There is a particular area I want to lay emphasis on which has been a concern to me, is the risk area because in the middle of the flight, the goods will be exchanged definitely and it will be a worried to passengers. The mitigating factors of risk especially for economic risks as in the case of the Grafton Water Company should be looked into for subsequent time, especially with the new company that is now taking over the assets of the Grafton Water Company. As a rule for any successive business, I think one of the mitigating factors for economic risks should be savings. But many a time, businesses go into bankruptcy because of financial crisis. I could remember vividly in 2012 when we had the iron ore booming in this country, there was joy all over but suddenly, we had financial crisis and that company has to close down. So if one could ask why not make hale when the sun shines? Why can't we save when there is an increase in production and sales or marketing? This is also a learning point for the Grafton Investment Limited that is now taking over, not to witness or experience what the former Grafton Water experienced. Although they did not mention the reasons for the liquidity or bankruptcy, I think the economic risk should

be one of its reasons. So, that is well said and quite understandable that as a new company, you learn from the mistakes of others.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to impress in the minds of all stakeholders associated with this Agreement. In the environmental aspects, of course, we have the Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Trade to monitor the obligations here on the side of both parties. As it was clearly stated in the first six twelve to months, the company will at least bring in their equipment and assemble them. There should be a follow up on that because, sometimes there are delays and people want the products that are coming from this company. So I want to advise all parties, especially the Labour Ministry to look into the labour issues of the company because it is said, that the new company shall take over the employees of the former company. We have seen instances where at times, when new companies take over such arrangement they cannot go by what they have agreed to or what they have put on paper that is presented to Parliament or to the Government. So I want to at least ask that all parties that are involved or associated with this Agreement to do their own part. The Government through the Ministry of Trade, and Parliament through the Committee on Trade to see to it that most of these articles mentioned in this Agreement are followed up and to be done in a way it is stated. Having gone through the article on article 22, I think they are similar to every Agreement that comes to Parliament. They are well written. But sometimes as a programmer, we are more interested in implementation. People are very good in designing programs but as time goes on, they deviate from the norms of what is stated on the paper.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, on that note, I think this Agreement as I earlier said, is not a bad one. It is a good one for this nation; it is going to create employment for our companions who lost their jobs as a result of changing the company will now at least have an assurance of getting jobs. Also, the Government will be getting revenue from the taxes that are being paid. As a Committee also, we may want to say it is flourished as it is being planned. So I want to implore colleague Members of Parliament

to actually see reasons why we can approve this Agreement because of its benefits that this country and the citizens will gain from this Agreement. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I thank the Honourable Member for his contribution to this debate. He has made his observations and quite rightly so that there is a promise in this Agreement that the new investors are going to spend as much as Twenty Five Million Dollars to rehabilitate the industry. The only way you can guarantee that is done, is through your monitoring and oversight that you will apply. I will urge you through the Committee to ensure that proper oversight is carried out and to ensure that, what has been promised here is fulfilled. I thank you. I think you have all consulted and I am seeing only one person. I recognise you as the Chairman of Water Resources.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I am the Chairman of Water Resources Committee. The Grafton Investment has products and one of these products is Mineral Water. They will be producing soft drinks, natural fruit juice, mineral waters and alcoholic beverages; and doing packaging and distribution. I am interested in the area of water.

Mr Speaker, as a Committee, we have tried for us to be able to manage those businesses in the water sector especially the bottling companies and the one using the plastics. Let me report to this House that 85% of those plastics water that they are selling in the street, are not reliable for drinking. Most of them are not registered. EWRC that is responsible for the management of water regulatory are not doing much. We conducted series of meetings in order for us to arrive at a solution, Mr Speaker we are unable. The industry is very much chaotic, not much controlled. People are just producing water randomly without meeting the requirements, and without going through the necessary procedures. Mr Speaker, what is happening in this industry is frustrating. We have serious water companies like Family Care, Chrystal, So Pure and the others. They have met with the requirements in producing water. The chemicals are expensive, and the machines are expensive. They are not meeting the standard requirements, even though they are registered with EWRC, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Environment also. Mr Speaker, people will just come with one machine, find

a naked building and begin to producing and selling water at a very cheap price. They are very difficult to trace. So this is something that is highly frustrating and majority of the water that are cheap out there are not pure. When I spoke with one of the Directors at the Ministry of Health, she told us that, we are drinking our faeces in this country. And when you talk to the EWRC, and Standard Bureau they will only tell you about fifty water producing companies that are pure. And when you talk to the union that are in this water sector, they will tell you about over five to six hundred water producers. Standard Bureau will tell you about only fifty water companies that are meeting the standards in producing pure water. When you talk to the EWRC, they are saying, "We don't even know" [*Interrupted*].

THE SPEAKER: So what are you doing about it as a Committee?

HON. LAHAI MARAH: As a Committee Mr Speaker, it is very challenging for us. We have made several meetings with EWRC, Standard Bureau, and with the Sachet Union, for us to make a decision. We have asked the EWRC to have an agreement with the Sierra Leone Police, so that those that are doing this illegal trade should be arrested but EWRC is the problem here. Mr Speaker, on several times I have called on the Minister of Water Resources, for us to have a special water management commission that will be dealing with the management of water. EWRC stands for both Electricity and Water Management Regulatory. They are more concentrated on the electricity aspect, because that is contributing more. The President also has a specific focus on water. So we have called on the Minister of Water Resources on several occasions, to have special information for water production and also bring in the EWRC Act so that we can amend it for us to concentrate on water. Water is very much important and it is a serious business if we focus on it [*Interruption*].

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what you are saying is extremely important. It is a matter of public interest because of late, I observed that when people fall sick of Malaria, it is just Malaria that is diagnosed but Typhoid is associated with it. It is obvious that people get Typhoid from the bad water that they have been drinking. We have to task you, to be more proactive. I think you need to put in more efforts to bring

about proper regulation of this particular industry. We cannot allow the proliferation of companies all over the place producing water without proper regulation because if we do, we are going to increase the incidents of Malaria and Typhoid.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, if the health experts talk about water related diseases, it would be more serious. We went to Bo on an oversight, we realised that they have a centre that is like a drainage place, very filthy area. Around that area, you have about fourteen water companies, fetching using their bare hands with an ordinary bucket just dapping it into the pits I will call it that way and later they processed the water. They are not even meeting the requirements. We also went to Makeni; the issue with Makeni is because the SALWACO water there is very much expensive. And because it is very much expensive, people are avoiding it and going extra miles to make boreholes to process water in order for them to drink. The water business Mr Speaker is something that we have to look into with all seriousness. You are right. I will engage with the Leader of Government Business for us to see how we can call the Minister to take serious measures about water business. They need to be regulated Mr Speaker. The other day we went around Grafton, there was a particular person producing water using an unfinished structure. For you to go to that structure, you have to go through drainage. When we went there as a Committee, it was by the grace of God that we escaped. The people around that area told us that this is the water that they are drinking because it is cheap. What we saw there, was unexplainable. It is very serious that we need an emergency action. Mr Speaker, let me come to the Grafton Water that was called INTER PRESS.

THE SPEAKER: That is the latter name; it started as Tuttik when it was first started.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: And they moved from that name to Grafton, after Grafton, we now have INTER PRESS. Mr Speaker, they were producing a very nice brand, having a lot of sales and then we enquired into their activities, we realised that for some period about two to three years, they have not been going through the standard requirements. There was a noise all around the place and people started avoiding the water. Rather unfortunate for them, they went out of business. This is a warning for the new

company that is dealing with water. For the new company that is emerging, water business is a very serious business and you must not joke with your Standard Bureau requirements. You must be a registered member with EWRC and also Ministry of Water Resources. Of course, the Water Resources Committee will be conducting serious investigations on those dealing with water. I believe that there is greater need for such regulations so that, those people that are selling poison Mr Speaker, they are not selling water but poison. Those in the health sector like Honourable Jorkie will be able to explain it better.

Mr Speaker, I only receive this Agreement this morning. I had wanted to make this statement for us to know what is happening in the water sector. I have not properly looked into this particular Agreement. I am calling on my colleagues for us to speedily approve it. But let me add by saying, water is a very serious business. If you are going in for it, you should be prepared for it. Thank you so much.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker one thing we know you for, you always follow up on the things you believe in, the principles and this is one of them. I saw your mood. I have urged the Chair of the Committee on Water Resources to meet with the Leader of Government Business after sitting so that, they will expeditiously address this issue. We might be comfortable, but what about the vast majority of our people.

THE SPEAKER: I don't think you should exempt yourself. What is going through my mind now, we hold a duty to the public on this issue and it should be carried out immediately. The Members of the Water Committee aided by the Leadership across the aisles should engage the water producing companies in series of meetings to find out exactly what the problem is with the companies that are complying and those that are not. Let us find remedies to those that are not complying with the laid down health's regulations for the production of drinking water. We cannot allow this to continue. We will be letting the public down if we did not do the needful. Before allowing the Leader of the Opposition to continue, I want a reaction from you Honourable Member, the Chairperson of the Water Committee. I want you to hold a meeting expeditiously, jointly

with the Leadership, at Leadership level and to summon all the water producing companies. Let me hear from you please.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Accepted Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Carry on.

HON. CHERNOR R.M. BAH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I have listened carefully to the last two presenters and I see no reason why we should waste time on this Agreement. Considering the fact that the next two Bills we will be talking about are not just sensitive but lot of controversies are coming up. I hope the Chairman of the Committee on Legislative Affairs will be strong enough to convince this House today. Even before I entered this Chamber, I was also approached by someone from the Water Regulatory Area Commission. So I hope that the Chair is well prepared for us today otherwise, we will send him back to the Committee. So on that note, I just want to join the two Members in endorsing the ratification of this Agreement so that we go to some other business Mr Speaker. Thank you.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I want to thank Members of Parliament who have contributed to this debate, of course it has been said that this Agreement is not controversial. We understand exactly when the Minister says obligations have been met. Most times when companies take over, they struggle with certain obligations. We are happy that there is a smooth transition and that everybody even those that have worked before are going to benefit. We have listened to the Chairman of Water Resources.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is not a secret that when you go to our hospitals or to our PHUs, the most diagnosed sicknesses in this country, are Malaria and Typhoid. For every hospital you go, for every PHU you go in our communities, everybody is being diagnosed with Malaria and Typhoid. That has shown clearly that the water we are drinking are polluted and we have a proliferation of water companies all around the country. Even in our small communities, you will see water companies existing in a community that has no water access and if you go to other communities and see how

this water is being produced, you will be shocked Mr Speaker, Honourable Members. So I will join you in asking the Leadership of this Parliament to join the Committee so that, we will give the Committee more strength. We will summon the Ministers and all producers of water including the Regulatory Agency, to see how best at least as a Parliament to try very hard to have producers that will do due diligence in the production of this water. I want to thank everybody, including Madam Minister because this is your first time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, because of the critical nature of this issue, there should be a time line.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, immediately after this sitting we will hang heads.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, but I want a report on the Table of this House within the next four weeks.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker we will assure you before the end of this Session. Let's bear in mind that the Session will be ending in May.

THE SPEAKER: And I want it on records.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Before the end of the Session, we should have concluded most of our Reports.

THE SPEAKER: Not the Session.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: The Session ends in May Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: No, I want it next month.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Accepted Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: So Madam Minister, thank you very much. This is your first appearance and you did well. We hope your Minister will give you a lot of opportunities

to be addressing us so you will build the confidence. Thank you very much. We wish you well.

THE SPEAKER: Madam Minister, what you have to do now, is to respond to the concerns that you have heard from various Members that have spoken.

MADAM HAJA ISATA KAMARA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, I want to thank all those that raised brilliant issues because we are talking about Sierra Leone and not other country. Water is life. To the Honourable Member from that side, who was talking about risk, it is taken care of. I think the new company that is stepping into the shoe of the former company has already known the risks. The name Grafton is a well-known name. All the water that they are selling, people simply calls them Grafton water. That company has held high esteem in this country. The reason why they went into liquidation is because, the owner of the company Madam Juliana Dicks, we all know she is now sick and she is currently residing in Ghana. We all know when the owner is not around, sometimes people don't take good care of something that does not belong to them. They are always trying to make way for themselves. So it is better we are having somebody new to step in and I am sure from what I have heard from you, the monitoring is not going to be left alone with the Ministry of Water Resources but as a Trade Minister also, we will make sure that our trade monitors will give them a little bit of their assignments to look at these varieties of water that are not good for us. For the risk side, I believe this company is serious. Hadn't been that they were not serious, they would have gone underground. So looking at all the odds they took upon themselves to have this Agreement, I am sure they mean business. The only thing we are talking about is that, let us put more emphasis in trying to standardise and regulate these companies. It is the work of Standard Bureau Mr Speaker. Standard Bureau should step up, because they should be looking at the standard requirements. It is necessary to call the Standard Bureau whenever you have a meeting. Let them be there because they should be given us standards, they should be taken care of the lives of people not just water but other of national concerns. If water is giving critical problem, they should be part of it to regulate it [Interruption].

THE SPEAKER: No, let me accept. I changed the name. Go on Madam; refer to him as the Leader of the Opposition.

MADAM HAJA ISATA KAMARA: To the Leader of the Opposition Sir, I am very happy from what I have seen in this Parliament today, that you people can sit together and debate on issues as one. I hope you continue debating issues as one. So on that note Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that, this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreement which was laid on the Table of the House on Thursday, 10th March, 2022. The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and Grafton Investment Sierra Leone Limited dated December, 2021.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]

[Government's Motion by the Minister of Trade and Industry has been ratified].

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Madam Minister. You are excused.

BILLS

A. THE ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY ACT, 2021.

THE MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

Committee Stage and Third Reading

The House Resolves into Committee of the whole House.

Part One, Two, Three, Four and Five Clauses 1 to 23 proposed.

PROFESSOR FODAY M. JAWARD: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that part One, Two, Three, Four, and Five, and Clauses One to Twenty Three stand part of the Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, the question is that part One, Two, Three, Four and Five, containing Clauses One to Twenty Three stand part of the Bill. We shall now go through the Bill page by page. Let us start with page one both the short title and the long title.

HON. ABDUL MARRAY CONTEH: Page one: the Environment Protection Agency Act the short title: The Environment Protection Agency Act, 2022 be approved from 2021 to 2022. Long title be approved as it is.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ok page two?

HON. ABDUL MARRAY CONTEH: Page Two Clause One: Interpretation, the definition of Agency.

THE CHAIRMAN: What about it?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, this is the Committee Stage.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: When he has the proposal, he should put the proposal and it should be voted for Sir. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is why I am listening to him. What about the definition of Agency that you mentioned in page two?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker from the long title?

THE CHAIRMAN: I thought we had finished with that.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: We have not. It was just a proposal.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you want to bring us back?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: That is why I said...

THE CHAIRMAN: No we've dealt with both the long and the short titles, and I heard no comment from anybody.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: No, it was a proposal; he made a proposal that's why I said proposals should be put on hold Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's listen to him.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, I see that the long title has been amended in this new Bill. The National Protected Area Authority, if you go through the Instant Law Mr Chairman, you'll see that the long title is being an Act to provide for the establishment of the National Protected Area Authority.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Leader, you are looking at EPA.

HON. BASHRU SILIKIE: Oh, we are on EPA?

THE CHAIRMAN: It's the Environment Protection Agency Act that we are dealing with.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Chairman, you can forgive the Leader for that because the sequence in which the Reports were presented, the Chairman presented the NPPA Report as the first Report, and the EPA Report comes second. But today on the Order Paper we have the EPA Report coming before the NPPA. That's what we are doing. I'm saying the Leader can be forgiven for that.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are guided by the Order Paper. If you want to go by what happened the last time please make the amendment, but the Order Paper prevails. Let us deal with the Order Paper please, and go by the Order Paper. I think this Act is more voluminous, is it not? So let us spend time on this when we have the energy to go through it.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, I am very sorry. Mr Chairman, I am a bit baffled, because we had expected that the NPPA Bill should have been the first to be addressed, because based on our last sitting, now we have the reverse. We should have made a lot of amendments in the NPPA Bill, but if we are going to deal with the EPA, we don't want to have a situation in which when we have concluded and we have a clash.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, let us deal with the Environment Agency Act now and then regain the energy to continue with the next one.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Chairman, they are intertwined, because the EPA is bigger umbrella to that of the NPPA, when you do the EPA, you have to come

back to NPPA. Some of the amendments you will be making in the latter will also affect the EPA. So that's why we are saying we go to the NPPA, by the time we go to the EPA, we will not have to come back to refer to this one. That is what we are saying Sir.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: No, in fact what the Honourable from Kambia is saying justifies that we deal with EPA first. What you are saying is further justification that we deal with EPA first. We can reference it. If you check all the three Amendments, Amendment to the EPA, Amendment to the Meteorological Agency, Amendment to the NPPA, EPA is the umbrella. So it's better we deal with the umbrella [Undertones], I know but they are all under the same Ministry. Its better we deal with the EPA now and then we deal with the subsidiaries. If there is any need for reference we can make the reference. Thank God we have both copies here.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can't agree more. Deal with the overarching issue and then the subsidiary will come later.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Chairman, I beg to make a correction Sir. We are assuming that the EPA is the umbrella, it is not. The Ministry is the umbrella, and the other Agencies are independent distinct Agencies. They are not subsidiaries of EPA. EPA operates on a different environmental level and on a different environmental procedures and policies and they have capacity to operate as a nuclear radiation, just as the NPPA, as well the Meteorological Agency. So we must not assume that the EPA is the umbrella, because that is the position that we will take along.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, you know what; let's not spend too much time on this. Why don't we do what we did the last time? Will you recall what we did the last time? Let me advise you. Let us go through the Environment Protection Agency Act, to the end, and then we put aside. And then we take the NPPA, since they are related, before we finally now conclude the two.

HON. DR MARK MAHMOUD KALOKOH: Mr Chairman, I agree with you they are interrelated. Let me make my point. Mr Chairman, I agree with what Honourable Tawa Conteh has just submitted [Undertones].

THE CHAIRMAN: I have asked the Acting Leader to move a Motion to amend the Order Paper so that we do the reverse of what is contained in the Order Paper now. Is that accepted?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, when I was approving the Order Paper yesterday, I was of the strong view that we are going to continue as we started, in our last meeting in which the NPPA Bill should have been first and the EPA Bill the second, but unfortunately what I'm seeing now is different. So Honourable Members, I now propose that I amend the Order Paper. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that item five A be read the National Protected Area Authority and Conservative Trust Fund Act 2021, Committee Stage and Third Reading the Minister of Environment and B the Environment Protection Agency Act 2021 Committee Stage and Third Reading [Undertones].

THE CHAIRMAN: So are we all in agreement? Has he moved the Motion?

(Question proposed put and agreed)

BILL:

**THE NATIONAL PROTECTED AREA AUTHORITY AND CONSERVATION TRUST
FUND ACT 2021.**

THE MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT

COMMITTEE STAGE AND THIRD READING

TABLE CLERK: Part One, Two, Three and Four Clauses one to Eighteen stand part of the Bill.

PROFESSOR FODAY M. JAWARD: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that part One, Two, Three and Four, and Clauses One to Eighteen stand part of the Bill.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

(Question proposed put and agreed to)

THE CHAIRMAN: We shall now consider the Bill page by page starting with the Short Title and the Long Title.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, the Long Title.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, the proposed Bill states that being an Act to amend the National Protected Area Authority and Conservative Trust Fund Act 2012 and to provide for other related matters. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, when this Parliament created the National Protected Area Authority, we are very specific in giving them responsibility. If you go through the Instant Law Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, we captured and determined exactly what this institution should do. Mr Chairman, the Long Title states in the Instant Law being an Act to provide for the establishment of the National Protected Area Authority and Conservative Trust Fund, to promote bio diversity conservation while management research to provide for the sale of eco system services in the national protected areas and to provide for other related matters. I now noticed Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, that the Long Title have been changed and it had been summarised and a lot of things have not been captured in which we established the National Protected Area Authority for. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that we sustain the instant title as is enshrined in the current Act.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am a little handicapped because I don't have the Instant Law with me right now.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Can we ask that the Legislative Director bring us copies from the Library? The Instant Law of the NPPA so that we give the Chairman. You know the Chairman doesn't have one so that he can be guided.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, there is a marked difference indeed between the Act of 2012 and what is being proposed now. Take your seat. I hope we will be able to make progress in this plenary. Honourable Members take your seats. I hope we will be able to make substantial progress in dealing with both Bills today, without reopening the debates that may have happened in the Legislative Committee. If I notice we are rehearsing again maybe it will be in the interest of this Plenary to send the document back for the Legislative Committee to go and deliberate and complete their work. But I'm not going to allow the transportation of the controversies into this Well. Otherwise what is the essence of having the Legislative Committee?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Chairman, I am a Member of the Legislative Committee. The Report has been read and have been presented throughout the deliberations and as far as I know we don't have such controversies that will require a reversal especially from Members who never attended, but they are at liberty to do so if there are such controversies to bring it to the attention of the Committee, but they failed to do so, and then when it comes to the Well now they resurrect those issues which were never brought to the Legislative Committee until at the end of our report and if that one boils down to going back to the Legislative Committee, I don't think there will be no need for the Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay I'm coming. Order! Order!

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: But every Member is at liberty to bring the points to the Legislative Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, take your seats. Let everybody take their seats now.

Suspension of S.O. 5[2]

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I will only allow interventions that are brief and to the point on this issue. Let me make it abundantly clear again, that I'm not going to import all the controversies that were meant to have been resolved at the Legislative Committee level into the Well. Otherwise I'm afraid you have failed in discharging the responsibility given to you as a Legislative Committee. Since I have noticed now that certain issues have been resolved, I as the neutral person here [Undertones], I will take a position that is in the national interest, not in any Party's interest. But my role as Speaker is to see how best the nation's interest is served [Undertones]. Now, the very first controversy that I see here is on the Long Title. Let me listen to Mr Minister first.

PROFESSOR FODAY M. JAWARD: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. And let me state here categorically clear that due diligence was done on this Bill. We held several meetings and we are at this point. I am here as the Minister of Environment to make sure as the Chairman was saying, to put the countries interest first. I will not allow people from the fringes coming to usurp all the good work we have done at the Legislative Committee.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Minister, you are calling us people from the fringes [Undertones]. This is our responsibility.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, I hereby rule that both the statement and the tone in which it was made, be expunged from the record [Undertones]. I will advise, hold on, Leader I want you to take your seat. Mr Minister, please listen to me and listen carefully what I'm about to say. This is the House of Parliament. Our primary duty is to make law for this country. That is our primary duty. I am coming; I got bombarded left, right and centre now. What I want to say here is this, you as Minister, as a member of the Executive you've done what is humanly possible to arrive at certain conclusions from the perspective of the Executive to move things forward. But once they traverse to this House and leave the Executive, they are no longer in your domain [Applause]. We act autonomously here as Parliament, the organ that makes the Law for the land. So the tone of your voice was a bit out of order, be calm, be cool, if what has been agreed

with you in your office as Minister, and you see it to be ravelled. I am here to guide you, I am here to help you that is why I made my comment by saying if I notice that we are rehearsing here issues that ought to have been settled a long time ago in the Legislative Committee, I will know what to know.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, Mr Chief-Whip
[Interruption].

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, it is very clear that the source of the controversy begins now with the long title because what is being presented to us is a truncation of what is contained in the extant law that may be the Executive discussion before these matters were brought to the House. This is why I am inviting the Minister so that I am better informed exactly where things started before I make a Ruling on this matter. The earlier comments are expunged from the record.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: I rise on S.O 57. Mr Speaker as your Deputy, my ears are on the ground and I can assure you that the majority of this House is not satisfied with the work of the Legislative Committee in the circumstances I move that this Bill be remitted back to the Legislative Committee *[Applause].*

THE CHAIRMAN: Hold on, I have a Motion before me from no lesser authority than the Deputy Speaker himself so allow me. He is quite right, he is my Deputy and his ears like mine are longer than you people think *[Laughter]* but his ear is closer to the ground, mine are closer to the top *[Laughter]* but we complement each other. Now allow me let me read S.O 57. Thank you, I have read S.O 57, may I now ask for a Secunder to the Motion?

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: Mr Speaker I so second.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]

HON. DANIEL KOROMA: Mr Chairman by procedure you need to ask for counter Motion. I have a counter Motion Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are right, are you insisting on your counter Motion?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Fine, no problem let us see where your counter Motion will take you.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Mr Speaker based on S.O 51; the procedures of S.O 51, when Bills have controversies and then this House commits it to Legislative Committee that is called committal process *[Interruption]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please move your Motion.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: That is what I am moving now Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not want any explanation, move your Motion. You are moving your Motion on S.O. 51?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am moving that based on the provision of S.O 51 the Legislative Committee has presented a Report to this House for a decision, the provision for the Legislative Committee is not final. The one who has the final is Plenary so my Motion now is, since the proposal now is before this House let us take the final decision here. There is no need for a committal, whatever issues that are raised here, let us decide now and have a final say. So I move that the Report be acted upon and let the final decision be taken by this House but not for a re-commit that is against the procedure.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: Honourable Koroma to edify yourself, read S.O 57 and you will be properly be informed before you make submissions. We are all law makers please, Mr Chairman we have a Motion on Floor.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am waiting for the Honourable Member to help me read S.O. 51 which deals with a completely different issue, it does not apply in this S.O. 57 is more direct and more applicable and more relevant therefore I ask for a Secunder to the earlier Motion moved by the Deputy Speaker.

HON. HASSAN A. SESAY: I so second Mr Chairman.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]

TABLE CLERK: Motion by the Deputy Speaker has been carried.

THE SPEAKER: The Reports are hereby re-committed to the Legislative Committee for further consideration *[Applause]*. Mr Minister you want to say something?

PROFESSOR FODAY M. JAWARD: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must apologise, as you all know I am a friendly person. I am a friend with virtually everyone but Mr Speaker in my widest dream; I cannot blame Members of Parliament. Mr Speaker and let me tell you this, in as much as your ears on the ground, my ears are also there and let me tell you this I will share with you the Whatsapp message sent to me by somebody from NPAA *[Interruption]*.

THE CHAIRMAN: Go and meet me in my Chamber.

PROFESSOR FODAY M. JAWARD: Thank you very much Mr Chairman, Honourable Members. I must say this has been a very good experience for me in learning course and we have worked so hard. Honourable Members, let us go back to the Legislative Committee and do due diligence to this document so that we can bring it back to a better version, thank you all.

[The House resumes]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, where is the Chairperson of the Legislative Committee? What I am about to say is directly to you. Honourable Members take your seats and be orderly please. First of all let me thank the Deputy Speaker for drawing my attention as he quite correctly did to the fact that there were simmering that I may not have been preview concerning these two Bills, I thank you to find them out.

It is very clear that the Plenary or the House as a whole is satisfied with what has come out of the Legislative Committee. It makes your task that much more difficult Mr Chairman, I commended you on the laborious and tedious exercise, you engaged in presenting the two Reports to us but that is the nature of the Legislative Committee, you have to cope with that. For the Members of the Legislative Committee please I want to exhort all of you that when you are here your primary duty that should be your guiding principles, not what is in the interest of a particular individual or group of

individuals, but our country. We are to make laws for the nation as a whole, for the benefit of our generation and generations yet unborn. So my advice is please wear the national interest cap when you go to the Legislative Committee to deliberate these issues.

Honourable Members, I want to believe this is the first time in this fifth Parliament that we are referring things back to the Legislative Committee, correct me if I am wrong and my reason for admonishing you, this is the first in this Fifth Parliament that we are sending back to the Legislative Committee, work that they have done, spent a lot of resources both human and material to do a work and to bring to Plenary, now it will be even worse if they go now and come back to us and for the second time again we find ourselves having to do the same thing. So this time around, I am appealing to all those participating in the Legislative Committee to have as their overarching guidelines, the national interest rather than the petty national interest or group interest that maybe imbedded in what you are told.

Fortunately I tried as best as possible to discharge my own role here as Speaker as a neutral, I think you can all testify to that and when I do so, it is the national interest that is my focus, nothing else and I am never afraid to speak truth to power. I am known for that, both nationally and internationally, never afraid to speak the truth to power and I have maintained my integrity *[Applause]*. So that is the advice I am giving to all of you, is a very difficult task but it has to be done in the national interest, I thank you all. I see Honourable IB Kargbo, do you want the Floor?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am up Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, this is for records, it has been recommitted to the Legislative Committee, let it be known by all that when Bills are committed to the Legislative Committee that is the time when every party concerned or interested or whatsoever should make a presentation for the attention of the Legislative Committee for a decision *[Interruption]*, once the Legislative

Committee is going through those processes people are encouraged to participate. You cannot decide on an issue that is not before you and the committed proceedings here is always done publicly, somebody will stand on S.O. 51 and then make a Motion, if it is passed and then the Speaker will decide that this particular Bill be committed to the Legislative Committee, it is public and that time being a Member of Parliament or non-member of Parliament, it is the opportunity to make your case in writing or oral, if you feel to do so *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on! Hold on! I do not want us to misinform the House. When report comes from the Legislative Committee to Plenary?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: I am not talking of the Report. I'm talking of the Motion that commits the Bill to the Legislative Committee. When that Bill has been committed, it was not committed in isolation; it was committed publicly in the Well here. To the attention of all those concerned. My advice now is, when such Bills are committed, if you know you are an interested party that is the opportunity you have to make your written representation or oral presentation during the hearings. But if the Committee sits and never gets none of those presentations, until the decision is taken and then the Report is now brought into the Well and that is the time when those concerns are raised it will send us back. That is the advice that I am giving. Whenever Bills are committed, if you know you are an interested party make your presentations known to the Committee to prevent such a reoccurrence. I am Nine years in Parliament, this has never happened. And you have agreed with me, even with your tenure here, it has never happened.

THE SPEAKER: Is this the first time?

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: This is the first time. I'm not saying it is unlawful, it is not unlawful it is provided in the SOs. As the Deputy Speaker rightly said. But my advice is, since it is public; if you know you are interested make your written presentations to the Committee for our attention before decision is taken.

THE SPEAKER: I can't agree more.

HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA: But if you keep quiet, until we prepare a Report, a unanimous decision we present it to the Well and then you bring the issues back that will require us to go back it causes embarrassment.

THE SPEAKER: The advice then I will give on that score. Your advice is a good one, and the advice that I will like to give Honourable Members and by extension to the general public is as follows. We cannot keep sending these Bills back and forth all the time. This is the first time it is happening in this Parliament. Now, once we commit Bills to the Legislative Committee, you as an individual or a group or Association, you have every right to make your representation there. But once the Legislative Committee has arrived at a conclusion, and made a report to Plenary, leave it to the Plenary alone to take a decision and legislate for the national interest.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, the fact that it has never happened. The Legislative Committee is working for us. They are working for this Parliament, if they bring a Report and the Report is not accepted, the Standing Orders is extremely clear. I don't think we should be labour ourselves with this, we are not embarrassing anybody, we are doing within the spirit of the law, and the law is supreme there is no way we should circumvent the law in this Parliament. So what we have done basically is following due process. They have done well and we appreciate them, they have always brought Report that has been accepted by us. For the first time, if the Members of Parliament have said we are going to recommit, they should take it in good faith. For the last four years, Mr Speaker, we have seen where Legislative Committees have done work and we have accepted those works. So for the first time if the Members of Parliament have said, let us recommit it they should take it in good faith. There is no way we can plan to embarrass anybody. What we have done, we have done within the spirit of the law and we appreciate the work they have been doing, we will continue appreciating the works they have been doing.

THE SPEAKER: I can't agree more.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Honourable Members, we have no plans to embarrass anybody, but we should bear in mind that every Committee in this Parliament is

working for the generality of this Parliament, and when Reports are brought here it is our prerogative to accept or not to accept. It is just like the Minister bringing a Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to crave your indulgence that we listen to the voice of this Parliament, we are not embarrassing anybody, we appreciate the work the Committee has been doing and we will continue to appreciate the work they do. I will encourage all, and I will want to appeal to the Chairman and all Members of the Committee, all Members who are interested in this Bill, when next the Committee is meeting I will encourage you to be part of their meetings. So, when once we all go into the meetings and we deliberate and we bring a document, it should be accepted by all of us. Thank you very much Mr Chairman, for the effort, all Committee Clerks we want to thank them all for their efforts, but we want them to accept that it is the law and the law should be respected. What the Deputy Speaker has done, he has done within the spirit of the law. Thank you very much, so we don't need to be labour on this Mr Speaker we are not targeting anybody.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, thank you. We are not targeting anyone; let that be made abundantly clear. My concern is not to have a repetition of another recommit to the Legislative Committee. Therefore, I am appealing to every Member, participating in the work of the Legislative Committee to be guided by the national interest. That should be your overarching interest please.

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: With your kind permission, Mr Speaker. I don't want to make such a promise that when the Bill is brought back it will not be recommitted. I don't want to make such a promise. This is the beauty of making laws. You can only get the beauty of Gold when it passes through the furnace. This is the furnace, Mr Speaker. If that Bill comes back and we are not okay with the Bill, it going to go back. Because what we want to see at the end of the day, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members is a beautiful law to stand the test of time.

THE SPEAKER: Let me use your metaphor. If you send the Gold through the furnace so many times, you will end up with no Gold [laughter].

HON. SEGEPOH S. THOMAS: So let them try as best as they could to present something beautiful for this nation. Please Mr Speaker that's one of the reasons why I don't want to make that promise. Let them do their work.

HON. ABDUL MARRAY CONTEH: Mr Speaker, may I be heard.

HON. LAHAI MARAH: Mr Speaker, I have listened to the Deputy Speaker, and in supporting the Deputy Speaker, let us make Laws that stand the test of time. And in making those laws, Mr Speaker, the Legislative Committee, they should work in consultation with other related Committees. For example here, Mr Speaker, Water Resources, we have created the Ministry of Water Resources, and within the Ministry of Water Resources; there are other Agencies that we have also created. The Water Management Commission is one, the National Water Resources Management Agency, they are in charge of everything that relates to water including pollution, and so they should be consulted equally. So thank you very much for taking this decision and we on this side, we are supporting you. Thank you so much.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, we first of all want to thank you for accepting the Motion moved by the Acting Leader. Principally, we've said in this Well that when we are dealing with Bills and we send those Bills for pre-legislative hearing, it is for prudence. First of all, we have definite dates being announced in the Well, like we are sending this one again because by the time the Legislative Committee sets the date for the hearing they would only communicate with the Ministry to coordinate the other Agencies to come and when there is a cut off from that point nobody would attend the hearing. We have had these with the Trade Ministry, with the Ministry of Information, and if we continue in that vein, then we will still have some of these controversies coming in. If you are going to amend a Law or you are going to do a Bill concerning a particular Agency, and when you go to that pre-legislative hearing, that Agency is not there but people are going to naturally question the process. So we are saying, as we send this back, let's have a date here and we communicate that we are going to meet on a date and other Members of Parliament will attend so we will have a clean Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Well, I agree, a lot of these issues that we deal with at Legislative Committee are cross cutting. And if they are cross cutting I rely on the Chair Persons of the various Committees to cooperate with the Chairman of the Legislative Committee. Now if you have any problem, I am there to be consulted as well. Don't hesitate to come to me and bring it to my attention.

HON. ABDUL MARRAY CONTEH: Mr Speaker, may I be heard.

THE SPEAKER: Yeah.

HON. ABDUL MARRAY CONTEH: Thank you very much Mr Speaker, for getting us back to this point. And I also want to thank the Deputy Speaker for raising up that point. I want to say it here that the Legislative Committee has conducted itself with integrity. This is a House of law wherein as Leaders we don't only lead by example we lead by very good example. As we go out there, we take the interest of our Constituents into consideration as we put these laws together. So, as Chairman and the rest of my team we are thankful that democracy at its best is at play, and we are going to do the same thing that we did before that we were commended for and I want to encourage each and every one of us here in leading by good example to help us. People can be dissatisfied, but then based on that dissatisfaction there must be some areas that led to the dissatisfaction. So we are going to announce here and also encourage Members to guide us this time around. Like the Chairman of Water Resources just mentioned areas concerning Water Resources, we need your guidance that is where we are talking about the synergy, the collaboration. If we do that, we will be able to be consistent in making our laws. The EPA Bill came here in November. We decided to put it on hold to ensure that we harmonise all other laws like Wild Life Conservation, Meteorology, and Forestry. At the end of the day for us to ensure that we sanitise the sector. And the Minister and other players have been very cooperative. We are now at the tail end we want to get it right and as a Committee we are ready to work with each and everybody concern to make sure that we do the right thing in the interest of the country. So on that note I want to encourage Members when there is meeting please attend. I also want to re-echo the advice of Mr Speaker, which doesn't

only go for the Legislative Committee but for each and anyone of us here. Let us put the country first and not individuals or groups so let us conduct ourselves with integrity. Thank you very much Mr Speaker.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Speaker, there has been numerous mention of the fact that we should put the country first and from what the Honourable Deputy Speaker said because he has been listening to the concerns of us Members of Parliament. He has requested that we commit this Bill to the Legislative Committee which was prudent and was right for the respect and integrity of this House, because if we are bringing two Reports to this House and we are deleting a Clause or a phrase from one of the Bills and we are reinstating the same Clause in another Bill that will bring the integrity of this House to disrepute. So the best thing to do in the interest of this nation is for us to go back and do the work sincerely and ensure that those provisions that are deleted here are not reinstated over there.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, we have recommitted this Bill. I advise that we keep all of our observations for the next Committee meetings. And for the Committee Chairman, we have a What Sapp group where all Members of Parliament are involved so when once you have the next Legislative meeting, please let the Members of Parliament know and all those that have interest to attend the meeting. Please Mr Speaker; let us continue the business of the day.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 23, to observe that for the first time in the history of this Parliament that I have witnessed, your stern decision in terms of seeing the decision of this House being autonomous [undertones]. Mr Speaker, its personal, I am using this as a personal.

THE SPEAKER: What's your intention [Undertones]? Thank you you've said that please don't go beyond that.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I still want to remind you that as a Parliament, we are yet to observe question time which you promised this House some years back. And as a Parliament we are concerned, some of

us don't want to leave this House without going through some of these things that make Parliament a beautiful institution. It's a concern and I believe we must do it. Also you talked about the Auditor General's Report, it has been lying there for the past four years and nothing about it has been debated in this House and as per Constitution, we have to do it.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: You need to be guided Honourable Member, that is not S.O. 23, please read S.O. 23, and guide yourself Sir. Mr Speaker he should be guided. He stands on the wrong Standing Order [Undertones].

THE SPEAKER: You have already guided him. S.O. 23 has limits.

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Mr Speaker, I put it under S.O. 23, to bring it to you in relation to what you demonstrated here this afternoon. That's why I have brought it up. It's a concern. Personally I have written questions which have not seen the light of the day in this House. So if I am here to bring it up under S.O. 23, I believe it's something that has to do with it and you are not the one to note it down its for Mr Speaker [Laughter].

THE SPEAKER: Okay, I take note [Undertones].

HON. SAHR CHARLES: Thank you very much Mr Speaker [Undertones].

THE SPEAKER: Any announcement? The only announcement is I will like the meeting with all Members of Parliament to take place tomorrow at twelve noon in Committee Room One. It is in the interest of all Members of Parliament to attend. That meeting is exclusively for Members of Parliament. Is there any other announcement?

HON. HAFIJU MAADA KANJA: Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 23.

THE SPEAKER: What is happening in your Constituency?

HON. HAFIJU MAADA KANJA: Not in my Constituency, but the forest at the Peninsula Sir. I am residing at Borbor, by CSC Quarry. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the past one month now, you will not see fire during the day, but at night, from Sussex to "Borbor," the forest is burning down more than a mile every night

and you will not see the people who are setting the fire. The forest is burning day by day and I am afraid in the space of two month time the fire will reach the Guma Dam, if there is no action taken. The forest is burning day by day, and we have a Forest Guards deployed at that particular location, they said they are in charge of wet land they are not in charge of the forest and the forest is burning [Undertones].

ADJOURNMENT

*The House rose at 12:57 p.m., and was adjourned to Thursday, 17TH March, 2022 at
10:00 a.m.*