

TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

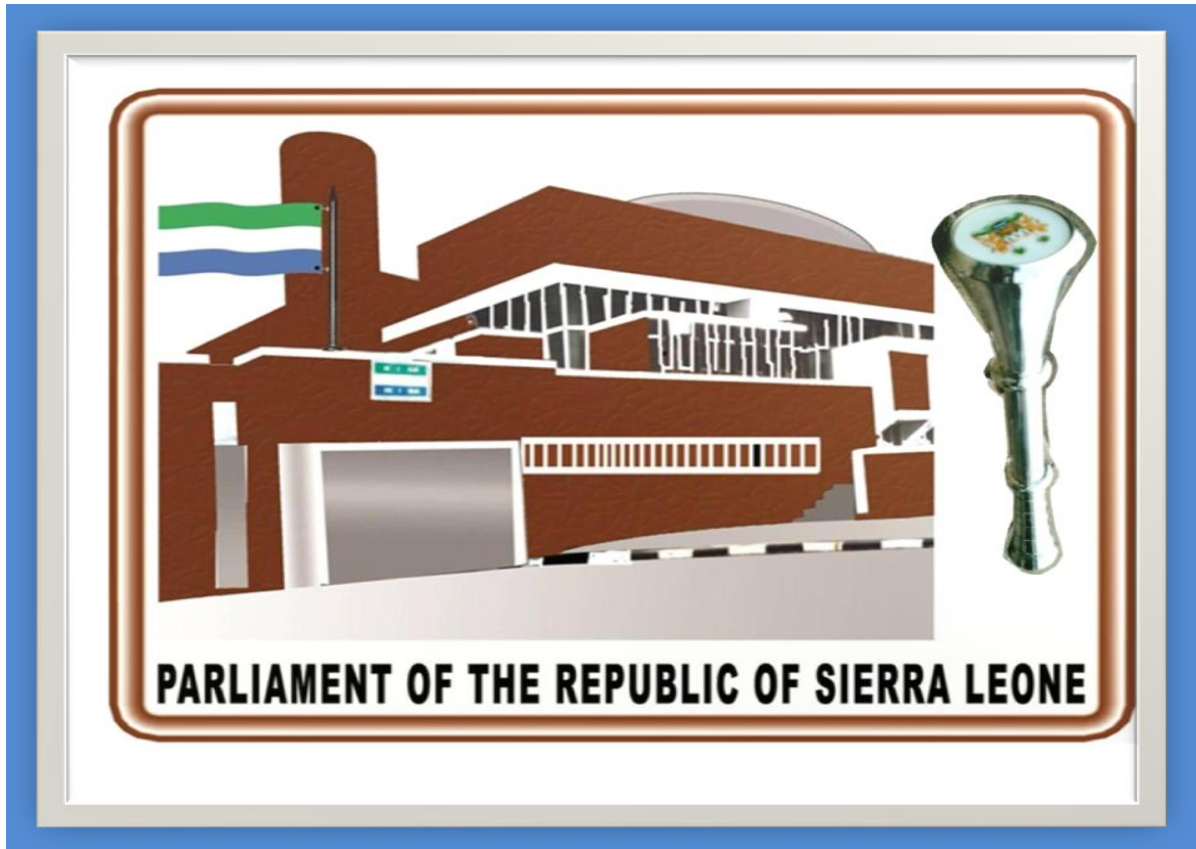
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

THIRD SESSION –FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2025

SESSION – 2024/2025



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
held on Wednesday, 15th October, 2025

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THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

WEDNESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER, 2025

1. PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mrs Fatmata Bintu Winston, read the Prayers]

[The House met at 10:05 a.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.O5 [2]

II. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY, 14TH OCTOBER, 2025

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 14th October 2025. As usual, we shall skip Pages 1–4 and start with Page 5. Do you have any amendment or correction to make on Pae 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? If there is no amendment or correction can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting, held on Tuesday, 14th October 2025 as presented?

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

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. MAMOUD KAMARA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday, 14th October 2025 has been adopted as presented]

III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am to inform you again that we have the laying-out of one of us, a former Member of Parliament, Honourable Agnes Kobba. This will happen tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. prompt. I urge those in charge of the laying-out ceremony to make sure that we are able to do that in just one hour because we have to continue our sittings at 11:00 a.m. Please endeavour to be here and on time. I am also to inform you that on Friday, we also have the laying out ceremony of our brother, Honourable Dura Koroma, who passed away recently. I urge every Member of Parliament to be present, so that we give our brother a befitting farewell. He was one of us a couple of days ago. Please ensure that you are present.

Honourable Members, I am to inform you again that effective from today, when Mr Speaker takes his seat nobody uses that door. All over the world, no Member uses door directly opposite the seat of Mr Speaker. This is just to inform you and the public that it is now a ruling from the Speaker. Honourable Members have the privilege to use the side doors and that is why Parliament is constructed in this form. We have two doors this way and one that way. After the Speaker would have taken his seat, nobody uses this door. Mr Clerk, you are directed accordingly.

Honourable Members, let me recognise the diligence of the following Honourable Members who are always here before Mr Speaker. Members of Parliament should always be in the Chamber on time to receive the Speaker. It is not for Members to come late and that is why I constantly recognise the diligence of those who are always present by the time I entered the Chambers. I urge the Office of the Clerk to ensure that these names are included in the record of Votes and Proceedings and for the leaders to take into account the names in the formation of Sessional Committees and in the establishment of the Leadership of Committees. You can refer to the record of Votes and Proceedings to be able to make informed decisions or to arrive at conclusions relating to Sessional and Leadership of Committees. I do not like interfering with the work of the Leadership, especially in the establishment of Committees, but I will reject any name which I am sure is not always regular and punctual. Before I enter any name for the position of Chairperson or deputy, I will reject any name that is not diligent enough when it comes to attendance and punctuality. I recognise the diligence of the following Honourable Members:

Honorable Ibrahim Kabba;

Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin;

Honourable Alpha FM Jabbie;

Honourable Alhaji Yusuf Makery;

Honourable Komba Quee;

Honourable Fatmata Sarah Soukenah;

Honourable Musa Fofanah;

Honourable Sylvester Boima;

Honourable Mariama Ela Goba;

Honourable Adama Bangura;

Honourable Alpha Ben Manssary;

Honourable Daniel Fonnah;

Honourable. Ibrahim Aziz Bangura;
Honourable Nenneh Lebbie;
Honourable Alex M. Rogers;
Honourable Keikura C Vandy;
Honourable Brima Manssaray;
Honourable Memmunatu Jalloh;
Honourable Marie Kamara;
Honourable Lucinda F. Kelly;
Honourable Amie Nyamva Moriba;
Honourable Mohammed Conteh;
Honourable PC, Desmond M. Kagobai;
Honourable Idris M. Dauda;
Honourable PC Bio Prince Lansana;
Honourable Quinton Sallia-Konneh;
Honourable Ambrose M. Lebbie;
Honourable Momoh Bockarie;
Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara;
Honourable Emilia L. Tongi;
Honourable Idris Sahid Kamara;
Honourable Jawa Sesay;
Honourable Beatrice Maya Kangbai;
Honourable Falah Tengbeh;
Honourable Abdul Sulaiman Marrey Conteh;
Honourable Musa Lahai;
Honourable Sarty Banya;
Honourable Aminata Sesay;
Honourable Mabiny, A. Taylor-Bangura;
Honourable Tamba Kellie;
Honourable Mohamed Bangura;
Honourable Daniel A. Bangura;
Honourable Alusine Bash Kamara;
Honourable Ibrahim Koroma;
Honourable Mariama Bangura;
Honourable Mohamed Papa Bangura;
Honourable. PC Haja fatmata Binta Kajue;
Honourable Gibrella S. Moijueh;
Honourable Ishmael Sankoh Yillah;
Honourable Abdul Kargbo;
Honourable Daniel B. Koroma;
Honourable Mahmoud Kamara;
Honourable Abdullai A. Kamara;
Honourable Amara M Kargbo;

Honourable Amara M. Kargbo;
Honorable Sheik Santigi I. Kargbo;
Honourable Moses A. Edwin;
Honourable Mohamed A Jalloh;
Honourable Aaron A. Koroma; and
Honourable Hawa Conteh,

I thank you and this is for the attention of the public. If you want to write about Members of Parliament who do not come to Parliament, please ignore these names. Thank you. Proceed. Proceed.

IV. MOTION OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE.

PROPOSER: HONOURABLE BASHIRU SILIKIE

SECONDER: HONOURABLE ABDUL K. KAMARA,

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I present to you the First Report of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service on parliamentary vetting of Presidential nomination.

I. Introduction

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service in tandem with its constitutional obligations met on Thursday, 9th October 2025 and interviewed fifteen [15] presidential nominees as Board Members, Board of Trustees for the following institutions:

- i. Director General, Sierra Leone Railways Development and Regulatory Authority;
- ii. Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority [SLPTA];
- iii. One Member, Board of Trustees, Bank of Sierra Leone;
- iv. Two Members, Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority;
- v. Three Members, Board of Trustees, National Social Security and Insurance Trust;
- vi. Four Members, National Youths Commission;
- vii. One Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Airports Authority; and
- viii. One Member, Sierra Leone Roads Safety Authority [SLRSA].

II. Procedure

The Committee maintained strictly its established procedures and interviewed the aforesaid nominees on issues pertaining to their background, experience to ensure that they have the relevant education and necessary backup knowledge to lead such important offices of state. Probing questions covered wide-ranging issues relating to

track records pertinent to their declared assets, tax obligations and visions for productive tenures. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also strictly investigated by the Committee.

III. First Sitting of the Committee on Thursday, 9th October, 2025

The Committee interviewed the following nominees on oath:

i. Mr Stephen Mustapha Swaray, Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Bank of Sierra Leone

Mr Steven Mustapha Swaray is a household name in financial sector. He is a macroeconomic and monetary policy analyst and consultant with no mean standing. His adept technical experience in economic policy formulation and financial sector reforms advice to financial institutions have earned him wide domestic and global financial expert reputations as were noted thus:

- 1998-2001, Governor, Central Bank of Lesotho, Maseru, where he spearheaded the country's financial sector reforms and restructured the Lesotho Central Bank under the IMF and World Bank financial sector development programs.
- 1993-1997, Governor, Central Bank of Sierra Leone, where he maintained stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes at difficult period.
- 2004-2019, Senior Economist in the Technical Assistant Division of the International Monetary Fund [IMF], Washington DC, USA where he managed the delivery of the IMF's Monetary and Capital Market programmes to various countries, including Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ukraine, Nigeria, etc.

Mr Stephen Mustapha Swaray earned his advanced Degree in Economic and Social Studies from the Victoria University of Manchester, United Kingdom in 1980 and has since then sojourned in the global economic sphere with discipline, dignity and dedication in his assignments. He is a retired but self-employed Managing Partner of the **SS Consulting** -Economic and Financial Advisory

In his response to barrage of questions from members of the Committee relating to the national economy particularly on inflation, the soaring interest rates on loans from Commercial banks amongst others, the erudite economist mentioned that the economy was improving though running it requires much work. He acknowledged the interest rates and taxes were high that cast a gloomy investment climate but

expressed optimism in the Central Bank's delivery: **"The primary role of the central bank is to control the economy through appropriate policies to enhance price stability. The sharp contraction of inflation of 16% as compared to 22-23% in previous years is commendable and with the Board support, the BSL will focus on steps to reduce interest rate, promote financial inclusion to embrace rural sector access to financial services. The issue of integrity of Bank staffers is a priority, and this must be carefully addressed to restore customers' confidence in the commercial banking sector."**

Mr Swaray concluded that he was ready to work with the BSL team to direct and improve the economy.

ii. Ing. Dr Albert Forde, Proposed Director General, Sierra Leone Railways Development and Regulatory Authority

Ing. Dr Albert Forde is a professional transport practitioner with over ten years research and practical background in transportation planning, engineering and operations. He has a Master Degree [2007] and a PhD [2015] in transportation [Planning, Engineering and Operation] from the New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark College of Engineering, New Jersey, USA. He did his Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. He has co-authored several peer-reviewed journal papers in Traffic & Transportation Engineering. His plethora of professional career experience has spanned across various institutions as mentioned below:

- ❖ 2024–present, Senior Technical Advisor, Ministry of Transport and Aviation, where he advises the Ministry on the development of policies and provide guidelines for delivery of safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable Maritime, Land and Rail transportation in Sierra Leone; and
- ❖ November 2019–January 2024, he served as Traffic & Transportation Engineer, Office of the Presidential Infrastructure Initiative, State House. He is also currently serving the Department of Engineering, Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone as Associate Lecturer.

Prior to his coming home to serve his people, he worked as Assistant Transportation Engineer and Planner, Division of Statewide Planning, New Jersey, Department of Planning, New Jersey, USA from January 2017 – May 2019. Dr Ford has also been very instrumental in the realisation of the following infrastructural projects:

- ❖ rehabilitation of the junction corridor at Roberts International Airport in Monrovia;
- ❖ as Consultant Traffic Engineer on the World Bank Funded Integrated and Resilient Urban Mobility Project [IRUMP]. He planned, designed and installed the traffic lights which Freetown now enjoys at key road intersections. A great innovation after several decades!

The Committee expressed satisfaction about the inputs of the engineer in the current transport sector upgrading drives of the government and welcomed the huge benefits the country will enjoy if Rail transportation resumes at this critical time of high tolls of vehicular road crashes. The nominee promised to focus on plausible agreements leading to the Railway reestablishment and would advise on what is right for Sierra Leone

iii. Mr Christian N. Ngombu Esq., Proposed Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority

Mr Christian N. Ngombu is a Legal Practitioner with analytical skills in research and advocacy. He graduated from the Sierra Leone Law School in 2021 after graduating with a Bachelor of Law degree in 2017. He is currently serving the Ministry of Transport and Aviation as the legal support with responsibilities to draft agreements and Bills. At the Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority, he was instrumental in drafting the contract between the SLPTA and the Metro Transport Company [the Waka Fine Bus Agreement], which has greatly improved access to public transportations. As a Barrister and Solicitor at Jabbi Associates, he stood high in representing clients especially in the litigation of criminal and human rights matters.

Responding to his role at the SLPTA, the nominee said “I will support my boss to execute the mandates of the Authority especially in increasing access to public commuters at rural and urban areas through sustainable and working policies”

iv. Mrs Zorah Efua Beryl Anthony, Proposed Member, Board of Trustees, National Social Security and Insurance Trust [NASSIT]

Mrs Zorah Anthony is an experienced corporate, human resource and organizational development professional with over 20 years' engagement in corporate and public sectors. She is endowed with proven abilities in high impact leadership in human resource management, organizational development, networking and negotiations. She exemplifies a professional that can provide high quality corporate leadership to help in most of the developmental projects of NASSIT. She has served in various public and non-government institutions and is currently the management consultant at CIRC-G Limited.

As an experienced advocacy expert, the nominee promised to work with colleagues to strengthen the client education wing of NASSIT to broaden the client subscription base and general awareness of the scheme.

v. Mr Umar Fuad Bawoh, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission

Mr Umar Fuad Bawoh is a renowned businessman, youth activist and philanthropist with strong national youths' empowerment initiatives. From 2018 to date, he has served as Chief Investment Officer, PRT Logistics and Agro SL Ltd, where he has impacted greatly on rural youths' development. Prior to this nomination, he served as Chief Executive Officer, Always Work with People [AWWO] children's Foundation, whose mission is to improve the welfare of children in deprived communities. Mr. Bawah's track records as Country manager of the operations of **Bravura SL Mining** in Sierra Leone from 2017 to date, is commendable for job creation for the youths. His ascendency to the Youth Commission is a call to deepen his service and support the Commission.

In his reaction on what he would be taking to the Commission, the nominee said the pervasive drug abuse leading to the wastages of youths' energy, is a matter of grave concern. **"The evidence of drug impacts are visible and require greater collaboration with all stakeholders to fight the menace. As a Member of the Commission, I will support whatever initiative the authorities have to handle this matter."**

He concluded on a sound note that youths development requires huge investments with sustained capital, which he urged the private sector to support central government's Youths empowerment drives.

vi. Mr Foday Conteh, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission

Mr Foday Conteh is a trained electrician, civil engineer and plumber with a range of experience in solar energy installation and services. He has a proven leadership record in resource mobilization and working in challenging context. His strong passion for youth and willingness to serve will give him professional latitude to make a difference in his new assignment.

From 2018 to date, he has been working with the Street Youth Connection Sierra Leone, based in Bombali District, where he has been training young men and women in solar, electrical engineering and plumbing skills. From 2019 to 2020, he served ADDAX Bioenergy Company as electrical and maintenance supervisor besides other notable construction companies he served with merits.

As a member of the Youth Commission, the nominee promised to work with other Commissioners to promote youths' programs, especially those leading to job creation and empowerment.

vii. Mr Stephen Godfrey Swarray, Proposed Board Member, Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority [SLCAA]

Mr Stephen Godfrey Swarray is a senior manager with a keen focus on operations and strategy across local government and private sectors. He is an acclaimed sustainable growth strategist which he promised to propagate in the Aviation sector. He holds a Master of Science in Petro-Chemical synthesis, from Moscow state Institute for Oil and Gas Technology in 1988. He is also very well grounded in procurement policies and procedures, health and social care development. He has served as a board member for Local Government Finance Committee from 2022-2024 and Government printing Department, Sierra Leone from 2020-2022. He worked as Development and Quality Assurance Manager, in London Borough of Southwark Council, from 2006 to 2010.

“As a Board Member, and an expert in quality assurance, I will support the SLCAA Board to reexamine the worth of services in the aviation sector in line with the ICAO’s principles espoused by the Authority. The Board’s experience is pivotal in the general governance of the Civil Aviation Authority and this we will support for the improvement of the aviation monitoring sector,” he concluded.

viii. Mr Emmanuel Delwyn Pratt, Proposed Member, National Social Security and Insurance Trust Board of Trustees

Mr. Emmanuel Delwyn Pratt is a trade unionist and management specialist with over 20 years of progressive professional experience in trade union organizations. As a seasoned administrator, he has developed strong and effective relationships across all levels of society, providing quality support to local and international trade union activities. He is the current vice president of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress and has also served as Secretary General of the Sierra Leone Labour Congress union of Mass Media.

He holds certificates in effective and efficient labour market programmes from the Africa Regional Labour Administration Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe and Employment and decent work for peace, from international training center ILO, Turin, Italy.

Mr Pratt’s representation on the Board of Trustees of NASSIT will draw international trade unionist experience in benchmarking, especially on areas of comparative labour scheme investment policies.

ix. Mr Sheik Dyphan Abass Massaquoi, Proposed Member, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority Board (SLRSA)

Mr Sheik Dyphan Abass Massaquoi is an Agricultural Economist and currently pursuing his PhD at Njala University. He acquired his master’s degree in Agricultural Economics from Njala University in 2008 and is currently serving as a Lecturer at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Njala University with credible records of stewardship. He has an excellent knowledge of Board operations, especially income generating, having some appreciable time at the Maritime Administration. He is an unassuming personality that always seeks timely and quality results, a value that always triggers his re-nomination and promotion.

At SLRSA, the nominee promised to work with colleagues to assess the untapped income generating potential of the Authority.

x. Ms Ibnatu Nat Kanu, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission

Ms Ibnatu Nat Kanu is a community –focused lady who has demonstrated passion for gender equality and women’s empowerment with strong focus for volunteer initiatives contributing to meaningful projects that enhance community well- being. She is currently pursuing her Master of Public Health [MPH] in disease prevention and health promotion, at the University of Makeni. She acquired her Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health from University of Makeni.

As a young enterprising woman, Ms Kanu promised to work with colleagues to support government programmes for the youths especially in areas of job creations.

xi Mr Lamin Bangura, Proposed Member, National Social Security and Insurance Trust Board of Trustees

Mr Lamin Bangura is a prominent figure in the Sierra Leone Correctional Service, having served the institution for 35 years. He is currently serving as Director of Policy, Planning and Legal Services.

Prior to this current position, he held several management positions where he served with distinction. These include Director of Technical Industries and Agriculture 2002-2025, Regional Commander, Eastern Region: 2023- 2024, Acting Director Human Resource: 2020-2023. He is currently awaiting results for the Master of Science in Public Administration, from the Institute of Public Administration and Management. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated steadfast leadership and commitment to his role and promised to transfer these attributes to the NASSIT board to which he has been appointed.

“I will work with colleagues to help the NASSIT scheme achieve its mandates as stipulated by law and would always answer calls from my immediate authorities to serve and will do that with diligence,” the disciplined and firm nominee stated.

xii. Mr Abdul Kabba Kargbo, Proposed Board Member, Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority [SLCAA]

Mr Abdul Kabba Kargbo has worked in the Airline Industry in Sierra Leone for over three decades serving initially as check-in and passenger service agent for the erstwhile UTA French Airline and Air France, etc. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts [General] degree in Political Science and History and a Postgraduate diploma in Education from Fourah Bay College in 1986.

From 2002 to May this year, he served as Sales Manager for Brussels Airlines, where he contributed to expanding client base by consistently delivering on targets of the Airline. He also served as Sales Manager for Sabena Airlines from August 1993 to December 2001. In his remarks on what value addition he would be taking to the Civil Aviation Authority Board, the soft spoken but experienced professional said: **“The Civil Aviation Authority regulates the Aviation Industry in line with international best practices. My more than two-decade airline services experience at the SN Brussels, Sabina etc. as country travel agent brought me closer to the airline industry. I will work with colleagues to provide technical support on initiatives that will promote the Aviation Authority.”**

Mr Kabba was adjudged to be a hardworking personality who always produces timely and quality results.

xiii. Mr Swakata Sannoh, Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Airports Authority [SLAA]

Mr Swakata Sannoh is a disciplined administrator, with over 20 years of managerial experience with sound knowledge in demonstrating leadership skills in policy environment. He has a proven track record in performing tasks and achieving objectives under pressure. He graduated with a Bachelor Degree with Honours in Community Development and Youth Studies in 2004 from the University of Reading, United Kingdom. He also has a diploma in Management and Leadership from the Chartered Management Institute, Leicester, United Kingdom. Between 2019 – 2024, he was principal Liaison officer and Community Outreach Consultant at the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority.

His level of experience exhibited during the cross examination by the Committee registered the aviation expertise required to advise such a Board. **“The International Civil Aviation Authority’s upgrading marks of any aerodrome depend on host of variables on airlines operations which the administrative authorities and the Board must understand and implement. As a team player, I will work with colleagues to achieve key service deliverables at the Airport,”** he concluded.

xiv. Mr Moses Henry Kamara, Proposed Board Member, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority [SLRSA].

Mr Moses Henry Kamara is the current proprietor and Chief Executive Officer of Euro-African import and export Sierra Leone Ltd., a multilingual Sierra Leonean, who is proficient in Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. He is a double Masters’ degree holder in Security Sciences with thesis on Road Safety and Criminology and Private Investigation respectively from the Escuela Internacional De Criminologia, Catalunya, Spain. He was appointed Sierra Leone Honorary Consul General to Barcelona, Spain from 2004 – 2007. He later served in the Office of the Attorney General and Minister of Justice as legal translator and interpreter of Portuguese and Spanish between 2008 and 2009.

In his response to the Committee, the nominee said the safety wing of the Authority needs to be strengthened with increased resources and personnel along the high - ways as most of the accidents are derived from reckless disregard of roads signs and warnings. **“Such commuters need to be arrested and charged for risking lives. Testing equipment for drugs users whilst on the road are essential in the road safety programs and these must be enforced with the Board’s advice,”** he cautioned.

He promised to share his long-standing experience on the road safety agenda with colleagues and the administration of the institution.

xv. Mr Samuel Yusuf Tarawally, Proposed Member, National Youths Commission

Mr Samuel Yusuf Tarawally is a strategic team player, with exceptional interpersonal and mentoring skills. He is an Accountant with 6 years accounting, finance and

management experience. He has always dedicated himself to provide exemplary skills to support the overall mission of every institution he has worked for. He holds a Master's degree in Corporate Governance with focus on Accounting, Auditing and Taxation from the Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science of Technology in 2022.

The Committee noted that Mr. Samuel Yusuf Tarawally has made remarkable strides in the Youths' sector especially in encouraging youths to take up music as a career. He is renowned for registering youths' groups into the music industry and moderating their activities most times. He promised to unite the youths against drugs through music and other income generating projects whilst serving on the Commission.

4. Recommendations

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee **unanimously** adjudged the following Presidential nominees to be adequately qualified for their proposed appointments and are therefore recommended to the House for approval:

- i. Mr Stephen Mustapha Swaray, Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Bank of Sierra Leone
- ii. Ing. Dr Albert Forde, Proposed Director General, Sierra Leone Railways Development and Regulatory Authority;
- iii. Mr Christian N. Ngombu Esq., Proposed Deputy Director General, Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority;
- Iv. Mrs Zorah Efua Beryl Anthony, Proposed Member, Board of Trustees, National Social Security and Insurance Trust [NASSIT];
- v. Mr Umar Fuad Bawoh, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission;
- vi. Mr Foday Conteh, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission;
- vii. Mr Stephen Godfrey Swarray, Proposed Board Member, Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority [SLCAA];
- viii. Mr Emmanuel Delwyn Pratt, Proposed Board Member, National Social Security and Insurance Trust;

- ix. Mr Sheik Dyphan Abass Massaquoi: Proposed Member, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority Board [SLRSA]
- x. Ms Ibnatu Nat Kanu, Proposed Member, National Youth Commission;
- xi. Mr Lamin Bangura, Proposed Member, National Social Security and Insurance Trust Board of Trustees;
- xii. Mr Abdul Kabba Kargbo, Proposed Member of the Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority [SLCAA] Board
- xiii. Mr Swakata Sannoh, Proposed Member, Board of Directors, Sierra Leone Airports Authority [SLAA];
- xiv. Mr Moses Henry Kamara, Proposed Member, Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority [SLRSA];
- xv. Mr Samuel Yussuf Tarawally, Proposed Member, National Youths Commission

5. Conclusion

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, with the aforesaid, I therefore move that the **First Report** of the **Third Session** of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Signed.....

Hon. Bashiru Silikie

THE SPEAKER: Any seconder?

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: I so second, Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed]

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: We have a very busy day today, Honourable Members and I hope we understand the Speaker. I am a Member of the Committee and I was present during the interview and I followed the interview keenly. I have always said that when it comes to qualifications for Sierra Leoneans, we are the best qualified in the world. I am very sure of what I am saying. I am certain that we now have Sierra Leoneans with up to five PhDs and many others have two PhDs. However, with all

these qualifications, we are still struggling to build our institutions and the country. I do not doubt your credibility and academic credentials, but you have to ask yourself how much you have contributed to nation building.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to start with the nominee for the Youth Commission, Mr Samuel Yussuf Tarawally. I noticed some qualities in him when we were interviewing him. I would like to applaud the President for appointing him to that position because Mr Samuel Yussuf Tarawally is a role model. In the past, whenever we heard about musicians, we always consider them to be dropouts, but this is a young man who has spent the rest of his life in music. He rose to the rank of President of the Union in the North, Bombali to be specific. If he tells you that he owns a Master degree, you tend to ask yourself certain questions in respect of how a musician took his time to enter college to earn a Master degree for that matter. I have just realised that one of our renowned artists in this country is now a Member of Parliament, Honourable Aziz Bangura. This is commendable, Mr Speaker. Many people do not know that he is a musician. He is a popular musician who sang the song 'dong sie. Baby gee me you don sie.' He is now a Member of Parliament and an Accountant. These are the very few Sierra Leonean artists with higher qualifications. He is one of the very few examples of Sierra Leonean musicians who are academicians. You are going to a sector at a time when we need it to move to the communities and engage our people, including the young people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes we think the issue of drugs is a government issue. It is not just a government problem; of course, we did call on the government to do the needful, but we are also required to engage the young people. This is very important in the fight against drugs. We always talk about Kush, but if you go to these night clubs, you would see things for yourself. These night clubs are proliferated with ecstasy tramadol. He is telling us how ecstasy tramadol and other drugs have infiltrated into our entertainment centers. It only take entertainers to go into those entertainment clubs and engage the young people to let them understand the dangers they have caused to society. This cannot be done by Pastors or Imams in those night clubs. Pastors or Imams cannot do this in those ghettos; it requires role models like him to go to those places and engage the young

people. Of course, we take the blame as politicians for lack of policy or lack of enforcement. As you go back to Makeni today, your first assignment is to engage the young people, including the schools and communities. Let them see the need to change their mindsets. If you can do that for us, I am sure Sierra Leone will celebrate you in the not too distant future. It is an honour to come to this Parliament and be approved, but it is more of an honour when your people celebrate you at the end of your tenure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we were examining the nominees, we also looked at NASSIT. If you said it does not concern you now, be rest assured that one day you will retire. I have said in this Well many times that you should not worry about what you do, but you have to worry about the time your phone cannot call anybody. Today, people rush to pick your calls and even if they missed your calls, they will call you back. However, I want you to know that there will come a time people will refuse to answer your calls. That is the time you have to be careful because nothing is better than any other time in your life. Imagine, no matter how worrisome or how I want it to be, I will be retiring at a young age and that is natural. I will be depending on NASSIT, but what type of investment is NASSIT doing that will assure the young people of this nation a brighter future?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we want our moneys to be accessible when we are retired. I am sure there are better investments and we expect NASSIT to invest in lucrative business. The issue is how we can expand NASSIT investments to guarantee the confidence of those who are contributing to the scheme. We are yet to enter into the private sector investments. I am sure contributions by private individuals to NASSIT are still low. How do we build the confidence of private citizens to contribute to the NASSIT scheme? Let us build a wonderful and lucrative investment. I would like to state that since the establishment of NASSIT to its present state, there are no tangible investments that have captivated the minds of Sierra Leoneans. Their investments are not viable at all, Mr Speaker. What are the investments portfolios of NASSIT? As the nominee goes to NASSIT, I want him to prioritise the investments aspect of NASSIT. He should assure us that we will reap the benefit of our investments when we are retired. Our contributions should be

protected from unprofitable investments, so that when I retire, I will have something to fall back on. What if we get up one day and find out that there is nothing to pay us back. What if we don't have viable investments? Some people do not even have a Plan C, let alone Plan B. This is the risk ahead of us, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that SLRA is struggling for funds, but I want to disclose here that whether the inflation rate comes down to zero or single digit, the fact remains that Sierra Leone is still struggling to generate the much needed revenue. I have said this over and over in this Well about the dilapidating condition of the road leading to Parliament. I am not saying this for the Speaker to hear, but for those of you who were not here when I raised this issue. Our road leading to Parliament is not good. This same dilapidated road infrastructure is all over the city. Please, when you go to the SLRA Board, take a close look at the road infrastructure within the Freetown Municipality. How do we amend these roads? It is not bad to have toll roads in most parts of our country, linking Sierra Leone to other countries because it will make our country attractive and investment friendly. It is not a bad idea and it is not a crime as well. We politicise our toll roads, but when we go to other countries, we do pay toll fees. Some people always say it is a burden on the people, but we need to improve our country. Let us do it collectively. I cannot imagine people leaving Bo every day to come to Masiaka. They have to go round when we have two roads leading to Bo. We also have a road that leads Kenema and Tongo to Falaba and Makeni. Those roads are viable roads.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we continue to talk about some of these thorny issues, let us think sensibly as a nation. The amount of fuel we are using to go to Kono from Bo is huge because you have to come back to the North. Therefore, when you assume office, please initiate something viable that works for us as a nation. I will not comment much on the 'Waka Fine Busses' because inasmuch as it is a novelty we need to build on, the transport sector needs to open up and encourage other investors to come into that sector. The fifty [50] Waka Fine Busses alone cannot solve the transportation problem in this country. In fact, it has increased the sufferings of the people in Western Area more than any other period before. I am saying this because if you are in the East, you would find out that all

private commercial busses use the old road, which is very tight. It is only the Waka Fine Busses are allowed to ply the new road. This has made it extremely difficult for our people to navigate easily. Owing to these challenges, the cost of transportation has increased and the sufferings of the people have also increased. I have been in those places and I have witnessed some of these problems firsthand. We need to open up and have more people to come into the sector and invest.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to share this with you. Recently, I was in South Africa and I want to thank you for supporting that trip. When we went there, we were discussing about water sector investment around the world. I would like to state here that majority of the countries in Africa that are sufficient in terms of water have moved away from the traditional form of government providing water to the people to the private sector. They now have a situation where the governments only provide the level playing field for private investors to come and invest. Their governments are only collecting GST. They collect taxes from the network lines that these companies are using. This is very easy to regulate. That is all that the government does. In Sierra Leone, however, everything we do is still in the traditional format wherein the government provides everything. This is not developing our nation. So, when I heard people saying that since 1961 we gained independence, we are not developing as a nation. This is because we have not learnt and appropriately bring back some of the things you have learnt in other countries. Mr Speaker, even landlocked countries where water is difficult to get, the private sector have ensured that those countries have water. What about Sierra Leone? In Sierra Leone, we have everything in abundance, including water. What is difference in our case? I am certain that it is all about our mindset.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to inform the nominees this morning that as they go to those various sectors, I want them to know that they are working for their retirement or for a better future of their kids. You are working for a nation that would one day pay you back. As the saying goes, you reap what you sow. If you plant bad seeds, be rest assured that you would not get good harvest. Today, even when somebody dies, for the family members to access the deceased's NASSIT contribution is a tug of war. It will take ages to access the funds. You should put in

place a system wherein things can be easily done without unnecessary burden on family members. We know people who have spent a year or two, running after their moneys. Some have surrendered their case because they could not have their moneys. Today, you are going to that Board and if you are going there to continue with the old system, be rest assured that everybody is going to die and families will suffer. So, let us build a nation that works for all of us, especially the young people. For those going to the Youth Commission, I want them to know that this nation needs them more than ever before. I have always said that until we are willing to build a nation that works for us, when our bones can no longer stand, we are at the risk of having a failed nation. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I call on the Leader of the Opposition.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is always a herculean task when you have to debate after a very good debater has done his part. I want to thank the Whip of the Opposition who has been very explicit and to the point in hammering home most of the challenging issues we are facing. We are doing this for God and country. Political parties will come and go, but Sierra Leone will remain. Therefore, whatever we do now, we will be judged one day that we were Members of Parliament, but what did we do to ameliorate these challenges? So, in a bid to exonerate ourselves from these questions, we have to make sure that we expose societal needs, not with the intent of discrediting government, but to equally provide workable solutions for government. This is because we are all Sierra Leoneans and sometimes we are judged by the country we come from. When we travel out of the country, we are not called political party and there is no political party in your passports. Sierra Leone is what is in your passport. Comparatively, we make assessment among other African countries to see whether we are making progress as a nation or not. Owing to the fact that we are elites or we are the political class, we owe that to our people. If we failed them, posterity will not smile at us. I want to express my undeserved appreciation to the Whip of the Opposition for being on point. I would not be repetitive or dwell on some of the areas he has talked about because we have a very long day. I will look at the areas he left out.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my first debate is on the appointment of the proposed Board member of the Sierra Leone Safety Authority [SLRSA], Mr Moses E. Kamara. Most times the CVs of our nominees are very rich and that cannot be contended with at all. Their competences are unquestionable based on what is presented before the Committee on Appointments and in the plenary. However, I want you all to note that at the end of your service, you are not going to be judged by how rich your CV is; you are going to be judged based on what you delivered to this nation. What are the problems you solved during your tenure? What are the challenges/problems you solved? These are all references that are going to be aligned to your legacies. I am sure for some of us, this is the only opportunity we have to serve the people of this country. What do we want them to say about us when we shall have left these offices? This is crucial and we must take it serious. Please, do not allow yourself to be listed among those who did not do anything, even when they had the opportunity to make a positive difference in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Sierra Leone Road Safety Authority has enormous work to do. Mr Speaker, from January to September, 2022, we had 9,622 road accidents. In 2023, we lost 269 lives from road accidents. We are laying to rest our colleague on Friday, who also died from road accident. What are we doing as a nation to ensure that we reduce the number of road accidents in our country, apart from the poor infrastructure. This is because during the raining season, conditions of most of our roads depreciate. This means our roads need maintenance and repairs. This function is usually performed by SLRA. We should ensure that the main roads or highways are always repaired. We were on our way from Liberia on the road with Mr Speaker, and we met an accident along the highway. A stationary truck, without any sign to indicate that it broke down, parked along the highway when a taxi bumped into it and everybody in the taxi died. We have had lots of those accidents. Nobody regulates what is happening in terms of safety along the highways. This is risky for our people. Today, they are licensing vehicles without seeing and examining the vehicles. Mr Speaker, the procedure is that even if the vehicle is roadworthy or not, they have to be physically examined to determine their roadworthiness. This is one of the contributing factors for road accidents.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in other countries, they have on the spot check they usually do. They have what is known as Breathalyzer they use on drivers to determine the alcohol content in their system. Owing to the numerous road accidents we are exposed to as a nation, we should begin to test the drivers who are driving along the highways. We have unauthorised vehicles that are plying our roads. The SLRSA has an enormous task to do. It always bleeds my mind when we lose a Sierra Leone carelessly. Our colleague we will lay to rest on Friday was a Member of Parliament and he had several responsibilities to perform. He invested so much in the development of his community, but due to obstructions along the highway, we have lost him. So, you have a very huge responsibility for the people of this country. We should ensure that no vehicle is plying the roads of Sierra Leone without basic safety equipment. Some vehicles park on the street without any roadside triangle reflectors. This is what contributes to the numerous accidents we are having in this country. Mr Moses Kamara has a herculean role in order to ensure that most of these things are corrected. I am sure in the subsequent report, the number of road accidents will reduce.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to talk about the nominee for the Civil Aviation Authority, Mr Abdul Kabba Kargbo. When he faced the Committee, they asked him if he was Abdul Kargbo, he looked at me and said no, I am Abdul Kabba Kargbo. When he said he had been working at the Airport since the day of Sabina UTA, I was in primary school when those flights were using our airspace. This means our nominee has enormous experience. What we have to work on as a nation is drastic reduction in our ticket price. We have a good number of Sierra Leoneans who choose to go to Guinea and fly to other countries instead of using our own international airport because of the price of tickets from Sierra Leone. Sometime early this year, I was part of a delegation that went for a delocalised meeting in Togo and one of the things we discussed was the prices of tickets in the sub-region. Mr Speaker, let me give you an illustrative example of what I am saying. I flew from Abuja to Lagos, which was about fifty-five minutes flight. I used the business class, but I paid **\$200** from Abuja to Lagos. Equally, I flew from Abuja to Lomé, Togo, which was fifty minutes flight. Unlike Abuja to Lagos which was fifty-five minutes

and cost **\$200**, the flight from Abuja to Lomé was fifty minutes and cost **\$2,000**. Well, they said they incorporated extra charges since it involved travelling from one country to the other.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, guess what happened? The Gambia and Senegal came together and agreed that all flights between the two nations must be declared as local flights and now they are paying less. So, we are not averse to going to similar agreement with other African nations, especially in West Africa. These were one of the suggestions I made in the delocalised meeting. We have to declare flights within our region as local flights, so that they do not attract extra charges. That is why doing business in West Africa is very difficult. It is easy for you to buy a machine from Nigeria or China, but to bring that machine to Sierra Leone is something else because you have to pay more than the amount you used to buy the machine. This is one key thing the aviation authority should look into very carefully. I will not doubt your knowledge and competence in the industry because the experience you have garnered over the years is sufficient enough for me to be convinced that you are capable and you know the problems affecting the industry. I wish you well in your new endeavour. I pray that your appointment will bring the greatest changes we are yearning for as a nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the appointment of the Deputy Director General of the Sierra Leone Public Transport Authority. I hardly repose confidence on appointees because I jealously guide what I say, so that at the end of the day, I will not eat my words. However, something that is very unprecedented and I will unhesitatingly repose my confidence on this nominee. I have known him for quite a while now. Mr Speaker, most times when you are in the university, it should be the time you carry yourself with dignity and respect. I am not talking about the sense of sycophancy or blindness, but the sense of commitment to progress. This gentleman in question was very composed. His reputation was very unquestionable and he was one of the students we looked forward to when we had challenges in the governance system of students at Fourah Bay College. His name is Mr Ngombo. He is not just a Sierra Leonean I met today, but I have known him for a while now. Mr Speaker, you were also a student of Fourah Bay College. There are

colleagues that will be given appointments, but will say no, I do not think this person will deliver because of how he conducted himself in the University. However, there are others you can vouch for because their appointments are very fulfilling and they can create the necessary changes we are looking for. I will not keep quiet when good people are appointed. They said it is considered a criminal offense for somebody to discover water in the desert and be quiet about it. I am not going to commit that offense. He is a good Sierra Leonean and I wish him well in that game.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleague, the Whip of the Opposition, has elaborated on the issue of the busses and the disadvantages we have. One thing I will also say is that in Sierra Leone, we have a poor maintenance culture. I am sure even the fifty Waka Fine Busses, they are no longer up to forty busses that are working due to maintenance failure. So, you have to investigate what has happened with the others and see how best they can be repaired. I am certain that they can be repaired. One day, my son came from school and informed me he used the Waka Fine. I asked him how do you call waka in English? He said 'to walk.' So, you have to ensure that those busses are working and they are in good order. They help to ease the burden of transportation in the country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my next appointee is Mrs Zorah Efua Beryl Anthony, proposed member, Board of Trustee, NASSIT. NASSIT is responsible for the wellbeing of Sierra Leoneans, especially at a time they would have stopped receiving their normal salaries. According to the audit report, over **Le165mln** was unaccounted for by NASSIT. This is very serious and we should probe into all projects undertaken by NASSIT. Those projects should be receiving corresponding returns by now. We agreed that funds collected by NASSIT should not be mismanaged because Sierra Leoneans will need these moneys. This is a very serious situation. Parliament should also ensure that we probe into NASSIT's investments properly. Another strange development in our NASSIT contributions is the fact that most institutions are not paying NASSIT for their staff. Some deducted from employees' salaries, but they failed to remit same into NASSIT's Account. This is common among MDAs and it is disingenuous to the highest form. Such act

strangulates NASSIT as an institution. Let us ensure that the Committee on Labour begins to probe into institutions that are not paying NASSIT contributions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will go to the proposed Director General for Sierra Leone Railway Development and Regulating Authority, Ing. Dr Albert Ford. I have never hesitated to recommend engineers in this Well because they are versatile people. Engineers can adjust themselves and fit into any circumstance or situation. Mr Speaker, part of our job training when we are in college is integrity. To me, I want to unhesitatingly confirm here that Ing. DR Albert Ford is a professional transport practitioner who has lived and served Sierra Leone for a long period of time. Regardless of the fact that he has several degrees, he has also performed in previous roles ascribed to his name. He has served as Senior Technical Adviser in the Ministry of Transport and Aviation. He said: **"....where I advised the Ministry on the development of policies and provide guidance to the operations of Ministry."** He has also served as Traffic and Transportation Engineer. There is an adage that says, 'if you want to know how beautiful your wife will be when she is old, you must look at the face of your mother in law.' You have proven to us that when you had the opportunity, you made use of it. We have no iota of doubt in your ability to perform. We wish you well in your new home. We know we have not developed a proper rail system, but the government owns the port and rail between Tonkolili and Pepel. That should be properly managed in order to attract investors' confidence. I wish you well in that responsibility.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I now take the appointee for the Board at the Sierra Leone Airport Authority. We have a big challenge with staff members who have served the Sierra Leone Airport Authority. I could remember in the initial Agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the SUMA Company. There was no explicit definition as to who should pay the severance benefits of former staff of Sierra Leone Airport Authority. Recently, we have seen former staff of the Authority, expressing their disenchantments or dissatisfactions over the non-payment of their severance benefits. I want you to use your good office and this House to ensure that no Sierra Leonean is deprived of what rightful due him/her. No Sierra Leonean should be deprived. I could remember that this Parliament had to

bring again the same Agreement and an extension was included in the Agreement on the basis of the fact that the extension should be used to pay the severance benefits of staff members. There are several other Sierra Leoneans who are yet to receive their severance benefits. That is against our labour laws. The future belongs to the people and development should be our priority. Under the watch of this Parliament, no Sierra Leone should be disadvantaged, regardless of their political lineage. This is because they are Sierra Leoneans and they should not be disadvantaged. Some of us are on the front row to protect those who are at the back. If we do not speak on their behalf, posterity will hold us responsible. Those who have worked should benefit from what he or she has worked for. So, I want this to be heard by the airport authorities, including Board members who are here to support their colleagues. Severance benefits should not be delayed any further.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the nominees for the National Youth Commission. It is always considered a blessing when you are chosen from among your age mates to superintend over their activities. This does not go away with the fact that you only need to give account of what you did while you had the opportunity to serve your colleagues. We have all seen the state of our youth in this country. We have also seen how drugs affect our next generation. I personally do not feel the fight against drugs should be politicised because youth belonging to all political parties are victims of drugs. I just want to encourage us to make sure that we are united in the fight against drugs. This is a crisis that has befallen our nation. I told you a story about my sister's son. I took him from the village after he passed his WASSCE exams and he was admitted at the Milton Margai Technical University, Goodrich Campus. I paid his fees and bought all necessary things he needed to attend classes. He only attended classes for two weeks. I used to give him **Le500** per week as lunch. One day, he went to attend class, but he never returned home. He is now living under the bridge at Aberdeen and his colleagues call him the Collegian. So, many people who have to contribute in the next phase of Sierra Leone's development are being involved in drug abuse. This is very serious and we must take action now. I think it should be treated with the utmost seriousness and attention it deserves. I could remember sometime last year, this

Parliament summoned most of the stakeholders in the fight against drug abuse. It has been too long we have not summoned them here. This is a matter of urgency and we need to summon them again, so that collaboratively, we fight against this menace. These drugs are ravaging our next generation without wasting further time. I want to assure you that we on this side would expeditiously approve these appointees. This is because there is every indication that they are competent and fit for the job. However, I want to caution that they will be judged for their actions. I wish you well and may God help you to succeed.

[Suspension of S.O. 5[2] being 12:00 noon]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before I call on the Leader of Government Business, I would like to recognise the presence of certain eminent personalities that are here with us this morning: Mrs Tuma Adama Gento Kamara, President of the Sierra Leone Bar Association; Honourable Alusine Kanneh, former Honourable Member of this House and erstwhile Chief Immigration Officer; Ambassador Alhaji F. Turay, current Minister of Transport and Aviation; Mr Sarjoh Aziz Kamara, current Deputy Minister of Higher Education; Ambassador Dr Kona C Koroma, current member of the National Investments Board and former Adviser to the President; Mr Allison George, HR Director at the SLPHA and the National Organising Secretary of the Sierra Leone People's Party; Honourable Dr Fatmata Hassan, former Member of this House and also former Leader of this House. She is currently the Presidential Adviser on parliamentary affairs. Mr David Fortune, current Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs; Mr Chernor Bah is my brother and he is the current Minister of Information and Civic Education. He has been doing extremely well; Mr Edward Lebbie-Williams, current Board Chairman, Sierra Leone Civil Aviation Authority and the SLPP Lord of the North; Mr Momoh Conteh Esq., Regional Coordinator, Office of National Security. You are all heartedly welcome to the House of Parliament.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Speaker introduced the Minister as Mr Minister and not as Honourable Minister. The Honourable Members were introduced as Honourable Members. I want to join the Speaker to welcome the Honourable Alusine Kanneh, a former Member of this House. Today again, we have nominees presented to us by His Excellency the President for approval. We have

always said that his presidency always does what is excellent. He nominates people to occupy sensitive offices of government and these people come to us as nominees of the President for approval. They do not have a job until they are approved by us. Your nomination does not guarantee you the job. You only have the job when the people's representatives approve you. The number of people who have been nominated by Excellency the President is huge. They do bow to us, which means they are bowing to the people of Sierra Leone. I am saying this because when people are nominated by His Excellency the President, they appear before us, but after their approval, they treat Members of Parliament with levity. Some do not even open their offices; they treat the Members of Parliament to a point that our MPs are always complaining. Mr Speaker, it will interest you to know that some of them even tried very hard to be elected to this House, but they failed. They were only fortunate to be appointed by His Excellency the President. When they go to these offices, they treat the people's representatives as if they are junior officers. Let me remind all of you that you are our juniors. That is why this House is the Supreme Arm of Government. The President is part of this House and we are the only people that provide oversight on the Executive and the Legislature.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Leader of Government Business, do you need to remind Ministers that they are junior to MPs?

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: They need to be reminded, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I know that Ministers are junior officers to MPs because Ministers are just an extension of the Presidency; they are appointed by the President to act in his behalf. Members of Parliament are directly elected and the authority in any state is given by the people. This means seniority is given by the people. Owing to fact that the President was elected by **100%** of the people of this country, that is why he is the head of state. He is elected together with his Vice President by the entire Sierra Leoneans. That is why they are the first and second gentlemen in the country. I am elected by **100%** of the people of Sierra Leone through their elected representatives and that is why I am the third gentleman in this country. Authority is given by the people and because you are directly elected by your people that is why you are more senior to Ministers who are just appointed by the President to act on

his behalf. It is as simple as that, Honourable Members. Sometimes when I go to certain occasions, the State Chief of Protocols has a lot to educate people about gradient in state authority. The State Chief of Protocols should educate people about gradient of authority in state occasions. Sometimes the State Chief of Protocols will say, Mr President, Mr Vice President, Chief Minister, Ministers, etc. before he mentions the Speaker. That is how functionally illiterate we are in this country. Sometimes we are educated, but we are also illiterate. So, let me use this occasion to talk to the Minister of Information and Civic Education that we need Civics as a compulsory subject in our schools. We do not have it as a compulsory subject and that is why we find it extremely difficult to urge people to be patriotic.

Honourable Members, people do not even know why the state exists or why we go into elections or why there should be national unity. People do not know all of these things. You cannot teach the citizens by just going to the radio or erecting billboards all over the place. Some people do not listen to radio and therefore they do not know all these things. Let us put system in place to educate our citizenry through our schools, starting from primary to secondary schools and even the universities. We should be teaching them nationalism and patriotism in our educational institutions, especially the schools. This will ensure that by the time they graduate from the universities, they graduate as real literate Sierra Leoneans. This is why you find it very difficult with the typical British man to insult the Queen. When you go to the US, they pride themselves in civics; they are so patriotic that you cannot talk against the US. You will have an American citizen who will challenge you; even our brothers and sisters who go to America just for a brief period are taught how to be patriotic. Some people do not even know why Parliament exists and what we should be doing; they do not even know the role of the Executive or the role of Lawyers and Judges. Some do not even know their national pledge. Of course, people like brandishing their degrees and some will tell you that they have double doctorate degrees, when you ask that person to recite the national anthem, he/she does not know. They cannot even recite the national anthem, let alone the national pledge. That is how functionally illiterate we are in Sierra Leone.

Honourable Members, we have formed institutions, including Commissions to educate the citizens through the educational system so that if somebody is in a vehicle and somebody says anything against the state, that person will have the audacity to challenge that person in a very educative manner. You have a responsibility to prevent the individual from saying negative things against the state. You have to tell the person not do or say certain things against Sierra Leone. We have to teach them through our educational system. I will rely on billboards, but we should love Sierra Leone. When we go to the radio stations, we say all sorts of things. You expect citizens to be patriotic and that is why we are doing what we are doing to teach people to be responsible citizens.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. There was a Member of Parliament in this House by the name of Honourable Thomas Manssaray who used to refer to Ministers as errand boys of the Presidency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the nominees to know that they have been selected from amongst many Sierra Leoneans to help his Excellency the President to deliver on his agenda. I have always said here that we Members of Parliament always face the people together with the President during elections. Our faces are on the ballot papers and what you do, at the end of the day, is what we campaign on during elections. Like the Speaker mentioned, there are people who cannot even distinguish what Parliament does and what the Executive does.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, whenever I have the opportunity to address this Parliament in the presence of our constituents, I always use the opportunity to explain to them what we do and what the Executive does. This is when we face the people for re-election, the questions that are usually put to us are the same questions that should be put to the Executive; the questions we answer are the questions that should be answered by members of the Executive. You would agree with me that before 2004 when the Local Government was reintroduced, Members of Parliament were responsible for primary developments. We were constructing roads, schools, community centers, etc. We were doing primary developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, immediately after the war, the government established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC]. One of the findings of

the TRC was over centralisation of state authority. They recommended that we reintroduce the Local Councils and in 2004, the Local Government Act was promulgated, which ushered in local governance once again in the country. In the Local Government Act of 2004, the primary function of developments was removed from this Parliament and taken back to the Local Councils. Mr Speaker, since 2004, we have not taken our time to explain to the people that these functions have been taken away from Members of Parliament. As we speak, our constituents believe that we are still responsible to take primary developments to their localities. Our constituents believe that we are responsible to construct bridges, community centers and provide other facilities in their communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as Acting Leader of this House, I want to make it categorically clear, and let it be on record that government is not giving us anything, as Members of Parliament, to take development to the different localities. I have taken my time to explain because if these appointees failed, they would not just be failing themselves, they have equally failed us. This is because at the end of the day, we will be campaigning on their successes. This means if they succeed, we would use the successes to campaign. Our people do not want to know whether you are APC or SLPP because the same questions that are put to the MPs in Makeni are the same questions that will be put to us in Bo; the same reasons that the people vote out Members of Parliament in Koinadugu are the same reasons they will use to vote us out in Kenema. So, we are in this together. Whenever appointees come here for approval, we remind them that they have been appointed by His Excellency President to help him deliver on his mandate. Please make sure you do not disappoint him; and by extension, you do not disappoint us. We reposed confidence in the President, but if the Committee had denied your nominations, the President would have left with no option, but to nominate other people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have reposed our confidence in the nominees and that is why we recommended them to this House. They have listened to our recommendations. If the House agrees to approve your nominations, it means you are going to represent us as Members of Parliament. You would agree with me after every five years, the turnover rate in Parliament is huge. The average turnover of

this Parliament is more than **70%**, which is usually for the wrong reasons. I want the appointees to know that they are working for us and we will have to face the people. Our faces will be on the ballots, including the President. Whatever we have to present to our people, it is based on your performance. Our constituents know our phone numbers; they know our addresses; they do not know you; we are the ones that will campaign for you. We are the ones that will explain the things you have done during your tenure; and if you failed, we are the ones that the public will punish; and we are the ones that will be voted out of office.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to remind the nominees that when they take up offices, they are not taking things for themselves, but should act on behalf of the Government or for His Excellency and MPs. I am very pleased with the contributions made by the Opposition Chief Whip and the Opposition Leader. They have set the pace for the presidential debate. We have to be extremely nationalistic in our debates. Immediately after this approval, we are going to debate the Presidential Speech. You have listened to your Leader and I want you to follow that trend. I hope this is not an attempt to intimidate others; but let us follow that trend. I have always said that whenever the Opposition critiques us, we on this side should be ready to listen, especially positive criticisms. The Chief Whip of the Opposition brought out sensitive issues. I would like to advise that we listen to them, although they did not listen to us when we were advising them while we were on that side. That is why they are in opposition today. We should accept their positive criticisms when we are on this side. Let us take their criticisms with all seriousness.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to admonish the Minister of Transport and Aviation. It is a public secret that when people retire or relieve of their duties, their severance benefits should be paid because they have served. Some of them have transitioned to the ZUMA Group of Company, but they have not been paid. Mr Minister, some of us were at the Airport few weeks ago and the affected staff approached us for this same issue. These are citizens of this country who have served diligently. I want the Leader of the Opposition to confirm the claim that these former staff members have been paid. I was at the Airport last week when some of

them approached us. Mr Speaker, I would have to move a Motion to invite the Minister to come and explain to us.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of Government Business, I can tell you that these people have already divided the parliamentary seats and the Ministries.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: Mr Speaker, I know that someone is eyeing your seat. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk about few of the nominees. Of course, Dr Ford happens to be my constituent. I want to thank His Excellency the President for considering people from Bo, especially from my Constituency, Baoma Chiefdom. We already have three or four appointees and I want to thank the President. From among the Chiefdoms in Bo District, Baoma Chiefdom has been considered; and fortunately, this Speaker also attended school in Gerehun. We sat to the O'Level, which means he is also a member of Baoma Chiefdom. In this House, we have the Speaker is from Baoma Chiefdom and the Acting Leader from the same Chiefdom. Today, we have the Director General nominee for Railway and he is from Baoma. We do not disappoint at all, Mr Speaker. People from Baoma always deliver. Mr Albert Ford is a visionary personality. The railway has closed for a very long time, but we have enacted the Railway Act. We have the railway that is purely for the mining sector. After your approval, your role is to regulate that industry and one of the things you have to put in place is operating a commercial railway. This could be the easiest means of transportation. The Opposition Leaders said the number of accidents is extremely high, but I am sure the railway means of transportation will help to minimise the accident rate in the country. We know that you have the experience based on your CV and the qualifications. Make sure you deliver for us, so that in the future, people will not ask why we had a Director General for Railway.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, It's a process. I have said here that since we had independence in 1961, we are still struggling. There is no foundation, but what the current President is doing is laying the foundation, so that the other governments that will come after him will develop on that foundation. If we had met strong foundation, we would not have been where we are today. So, His Excellency is laying the foundation and that is where we are. We are plus one and we will move from plus one going forward. His Excellency has been laying the foundation in the

past seven years and we expect others to come and continue. I have noticed that the entire youth sector has been committed to the Northern Province. This is because everybody we interviewed in respect of the Youth Commission hails from the North. I am sure one of them is a Regent Chief in Bombali Shebora. The nominees for the youth sector are either from Makeni or Port Loko. This is how considerate the President is and his actions promote national unity and cohesion. He did not bring people from the South/East. Thankfully, one of them is a young Musician from Makeni; he was the president of the Artist Union as well. This is what His Excellency does; he encourages every facet of society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind all the young nominees about their responsibilities. I am saying this because if they failed, they are not just failing themselves, they will be failing Northern Province and by extension, the young people of Sierra Leone. Please work as a family or work as a team. Make sure you deliver for people of Sierra Leone. When you go to those remote places, your role is to make sure people understand the message. If you are struggling with the English Language, please speak Temne and bring policies that will develop the young people. I want you to know that drugs are on the increase and that is why we have to find ways and means of engaging the young people by bringing policies that will help to transform their lives. Please encourage the young people to go to school to be educated in civics. They should be encouraged to do things that will benefit them, rather than hanging around the ghettos. Please use your good talent to encourage other musicians to compose anti-drugs songs. Well, we now have one musician in this Parliament and one musician in the Executive.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the complement of NASSIT. All of them are here, but NASSIT needs to 'up their game.' We need more investments. We are spending money and this is why you should not just rely on collecting moneys from employers. Of course, you use this money to do more investments. We saw the President when he opened the Victoria Park Market, but that is not enough. You should bring sustainable investments, so that the scheme will develop. We want you to bring more investments and you have to use your good office and good ideas to accomplish it. To the lady Professor, I want to say congratulations to the women.

During the interview, the women in the Committee on Appointments showered a lot of support for the Professor. Please, do not disappoint them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not conclude without mentioning Mr Steve Swaray. This is a household name in Sierra Leone. When we were young, these are people we used to admire a lot. In social studies class, we used to read about them. He was the Bank Governor and I had the opportunity to interview Mr Steve Swaray. Mr Speaker, I grew up at Low-cost. His personal driver was at Low-cost; and we used to admire him and the Bank Governor's children. Today, the former governor is here and he has a wealth of experience. According to Mr Steve Swaray's CV, he has worked as Bank Governor in Sierra Leone and Bank Governor in Lesotho. He worked for the IMF and other institutions. Please use that knowledge to develop this country. Mr Speaker, I am sure the current Bank Governor is very interested in Mr Swaray. I know he will work with him collaboratively, in order to save the economy and to move Sierra Leone forward. You have served as Bank Governor before and I am certain that you know the challenges of our economy. There are global issues you need to address. You must have made some mistakes, but you now have the opportunity to advise the governor and correct the mistakes. Make sure you use your international experience to bring new ideas; make sure you work with the bank to reduce the interest rate, which is extremely high. That is even worrisome for our businesses and this could be one of the reasons the prices of commodities are so high in Sierra Leone. Our interest rates range from **25%** to **27%**. You would agree with me that any businessman who takes a loan from the bank has to pay **27%** interest rate, which means he is working for the bank. This is why businesses are falling in the country. Please make sure you deliver.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank all those who have contributed in this debate. I move that the First Report of the Third Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and the recommendations contained therein be approved. Thank you very much.

[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]

[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public has been approved]

THE SPEAKER: On behalf of Parliament, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your approval. Please go to those offices and help this nation. Please do something different. We have been doing the same thing over and over, but we have not made much progress. So do something different this time.

V. MOTION OF THANKS TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT, DR JULIUS MAADA BIO

PROPOSER: HONOURABLE BASHIRU SILIKIE,

SECONDER: HONOURABLE ABDUL KARGBO

HON. LUCINDA F. KELLIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to add my voice to this debate. I want to thank the President for the Speech he delivered in this House of Parliament. I will start my debate with the Five Game Changers and one of them is the Feed Salone. The Feed Salone is a very good initiative because it is the only way we can have enough food for our people. I do not have problem with what is in the Speech. I have seen the strides government has taken and the progress in the Feed Salone initiative. I have seen the reduction in the price of rice and the steps the government has taken to make sure this nation has enough food. However, there are many problems we still need to address as a nation. The Feed Salone is not an individual issue; it is an issue that affect all of us and that is why all of us should put hands on deck in making sure that we achieve our goals. The aim is to enable us provide enough food for our people. If we looked at the 17 Goals of the SDGs, Goal 3, talks about good health and wellbeing. If you are sure of good health and wellbeing, it means you have good food on your table; but without good food, you will not have good health.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I think the government has started taking some deliberate actions to ensure that we have abundance food in this country. I believe government should take this initiative very seriously if we want enough food. If we want food sufficiency in this nation, we have to take deliberate steps, especially on the part of government. Government should step up efforts, so that the Agriculture sector will be able to provide enough food for us. This is because when we talk about Feed Salone, we are not only talking about reduction in the price of imported

rice; it means we should be able to feed ourselves as a nation or provide the food that we need as Sierra Leoneans. That is what food sufficiency is all about; it is not about reduction in the price of imported rice.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are important steps the government needs to take if we are to succeed as a nation. I am an Agriculturist, which means I am part of those who are supporting the government to provide food for Sierra Leoneans. I wish my Paramount was here, but I have over forty hectares of cassava plantation. I have brought garri production machine that can process cassava into garri product. Garri help to supplement rice consumption in Sierra Leone and I am working very closely with government to make sure that our people have enough food on their tables. As I said earlier, this is not an individual issue; it is a collective responsibility for all of us to make sure that we go into actual production. We are supporting the government to provide enough food to our people. As Opposition MPs, we are not only here to criticise; we are also here to provide solutions and make recommendations for the betterment of this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there are things I want the government to look at very carefully if we want to succeed as a nation. One of the things I will look at is timely assistance to our farmers. I am a farmer and I know what I am saying. Of course, the government is supporting farmers, but most of the time the support is not coming at the right time. I want to state here that farming is usually done seasonally and if the support is not provided on time, it will affect the production chain. So, government should look into this and make sure that they take prompt actions that can provide adequate assistance to the farmers.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we should take that into account by informing the Minister of Agriculture. The Minister should be informed about these issues the Honourable Member is mentioning here.

HON. LUCINDA F. KELLIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was saying that timely assistance to farmers is very critical in order to ensure good harvest. This has been a very big problem in the Agriculture Sector. We have never got assistance at the right time. Assistance always comes very later and this is affecting the Sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I would like to talk about is that we should support farmers beyond political lines. If we want to succeed as a nation in terms of ensuring food sufficiency in this Sierra Leone, we should go beyond political lines in supporting the farmers. I can tell you that we have a lot of political farmers; they are not farmers at all; they do not go to the farm, but they are the ones receiving all kinds of supports from the agricultural district offices. We the real farmers are working all by ourselves without supports. We are using our own moneys to finance our projects. We are not getting the actual support we need from the government. So, I am advising government to make sure that whenever they have support for farmers, they should find out about the fake and real farmers. The Government should make sure that they give assistance to the actual farmers. This is one of the ways we can ensure food sufficiency in this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will continue my debate on Page 11, with 3rd Game Changer, which has to do with 'youth empowerment scheme' is mentioned. With your permission, Mr Speaker, Paragraph 100 states: **"Two years ago, I launched the Youth Empowerment Scheme, national mission to create 500,000 jobs within five years."** Mr Speaker, this is a complete reverse we have in Kono District. All of us know that Kono District is in serious crisis. The dispute between the mine workers and Koidu Holding Limited is a very serious crisis in Kono District. I am sure over 1,000 workers lost their jobs and this has turned into a nightmare for us. We are in total darkness; not in darkness because of lack of electricity, but in darkness because the people need to know what is going on. The workers need to understand the present situation. This is because they need to receive their terminal benefits. As we speak, nothing is going on and Members of Parliament are in total darkness. Their questions are so many that we cannot answer all their questions because we do not know what is going on with that particular issue. So, we cannot say much about the situation in Kono District, but that issue has turned into nightmare. We hope that the government will intervene to negotiate between the workers and the Company in a win/win situation, wherein the workers' demands will be addressed and the Company will also continue its operations. That

Company is one of the highest employers in that part of the country, but our people are out of job. Kono District has turned into a den of robbers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other serious problem we are facing is not only the high rate of robbery, but businesses are closing down. Some mine workers I know have died out of frustration. This is because they do not know the way forward and they need to know what is going on. So, I would like to call on the government to take actions by ensuring that this problem is resolved. I was in Kono District during the recess period and I saw seven youths died in the mines. People are dying in that place because the mining site is now a deathtrap for our people. We need the government to speak up and take appropriate actions. We do not want to politicise issues of national importance. The issue between the Koidu Holdings Limited and the workers is all over Social Media and we have seen what has been happening. There are lots of controversies among the First Lady, the Chief Minister, the Minister of Mines and the Minister of Labour. This issue has been politicised because the appropriate actions they should have taken were not taken. They were not able to mediate and that has caused the jobs of over 1,000 people. There is a saying in Krio which says, SO.2 'wen two elephants dae fet, na grass dae suffer.' Our people are now suffering. They need an answer to their problem. The Government needs to talk to them because we do not know what to say anymore. Sometimes we do not go to certain places in Kono District because of the attacks we are receiving from these people. They thought we are not seeking their interest. Sometimes we had to hide from them. This is the situation we are facing, Mr Speaker. So, I call on the Government to look into this matter and do something about it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would also like to look at the Game Changer relating to infrastructural development. I will focus on road infrastructure. We all know how important roads are in any country. If we are talking about development, roads are key in every country; they are part of the development of every country; they link towns, districts, cities, regions and countries. I can still remember that during the elections, President Bio promised the people of Kono to construct one of the most important roads that will link Kamiendor and Guinea border. That road is not only an ordinary road, but it is an economically viable road. That road will make

it easy for our people to access Koidu Town and even Freetown, instead of going to Guinea with their farm produce. This has been a very serious problem. Therefore, I want to remind the government to work on its commitments in respect of the roads. Since the establishment of the University of Science and Technology in Kono almost five years ago, much has not been achieved. The students have not been able to use that building and the government should do something towards it.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during campaign period, this government condemned the Toll Road Agreements; but today, they are the ones talking about toll road Agreement for the road from Mano Junction to Tongo and Bumpe Junction. I know we want roads, but we do not want roads that will bring more burden on the lives of the people. We want the government to think about that toll road and decrease the number of tollgates. We do not want too much financial burden on the people. The issue relating to mine workers is a serious issue. The government has to do something to fix that problem. We also want to see the Kamiendor road fixed because government promised to complete that road in November 2025. During the campaign period in 2023, machines were deployed and the construction process commenced immediately, but after the elections, the machines were withdrawn and nothing is going on. Something has to happen; the government needs to take prompt action to fix that road as was promised. I want to thank you all very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Lucinda Kellie. I now call on Honourable Nenneh Lebbie.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise to add my voice to the contributions made by colleagues who have debated and have applauded his Excellency the President on behalf of my people in Bo District that I represent. I want to say thanks to the President for what is contained in this Speech. I had wanted to preface my debate with words of caution, but the Chief Whip of the Opposition has made my day. He has made my day, including the Leader of the Opposition. I was going to give some words of caution, but thankfully, they have made my day because they have made statements I wanted to state here. The two leaders sounded words of caution for all Sierra Leoneans, including this Parliament. We are representing Sierra Leoneans. I have

always said that we need to move this country forward. We should not be admiring other countries while we continue to do the wrong things in our country. I will not waste my time on unity, patriotism and oneness in this House; I will only talk about few things.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Agriculture is the first point I want to talk about. You would agree with me that for far too long, even before President Maada Bio, we have been yearning for the prioritisation of agriculture. This President has done it because he is a listening President. He has prioritised agriculture to be the flagship programme of his second term. As we speak, we have started seeing some positive results; we have started seeing reduction in the cost of rice because we have paid serious attention to agriculture. Mr Speaker, I am sure the land at Tormabum is presently being utilised; serious agricultural programmes are going on and that is what we have been saying. This government has decided to pay attention to Agriculture. I can assure this House and the nation that we will move back to where we were when we used to export rice to Banjul and other countries. I can assure this nation with confidence that we are on the right track and we will move back to the days when we can feed ourselves. We have no reason to cry of hunger because God has endowed this country with fertile soil; God has endowed this country with people who have the energy to work. However, what is disturbing us now is the issue of youths in the villages who have engaged themselves in Okada or commercial transportation. This is now our problem because if you go to some villages, you would only meet the old people who can no longer endure hard labour, while our young men and women are now in bigger towns, riding Okada. I hope we can engage the Minister of Youths Affairs to involve our youths in the villages.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it will surprise you to note that drugs intake is now a serious issue in our villages and our youths are no longer doing what they used to do, such as agriculture. Mr Speaker, I want to thank His Excellency for the attention he has given to agriculture. I will not go over all the paragraphs that have to do with agriculture. However, I would like to proffer some suggestions or measures we can use to improve agriculture in the country. If you go to other places, you would find out that when they are harvesting their farm produce, they

preserve them. We have farm produce like apples that are imported into the country and are well-preserved. We also have grapes and other agricultural products that are properly preserved. You would agree with me that preservation is our main problem. Therefore, we must devise ways of enhancing the preservation of our farm produce. The President and the Minister of Agriculture are working to improve agriculture in the country. We have a lot of people who are producing okra, but how can they preserve the okra? All these wastages can cause problems for us. How can we properly preserve pepper? Most of our farm produce are perishable foods. I am sure if we put in place preservative measures, we will have more than enough food in our country. Sometimes we run out of some of these products simply because most of them are seasonal products, such as okra, pepper, garden eggs, etc. All these farm produce need to be preserved because they are seasonal products. My advice to the Minister of Agriculture is to improve on the preservation of our farm products. We have improved on cocoa production in this country. I only wish that Sierra Leoneans will go into more cocoa production because it now takes three years for it to be harvested. That crop used to take seven to eight years before it can be harvested. So, I want to encourage Sierra Leoneans to go into those types of agricultural practices that improve our crops.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraphs 25 to 35 talked about fishing in our country. Fishing has taken a different trajectory; fishing is a very good activity for this country because it contributes to the GDP of the country. I am very impressed with what is going on presently. The Ministry only needs to work harder in order to meet or exceed its revenue target. We should exceed our targets at all cost. I used the word 'our' because I am the Chairperson of the parliamentary Committee on Fisheries and Marine Resources. Mr Speaker, each time we engage the Ministry officials, they always tell us that they are generating so much revenue for the Ministry of Finance, but they as a Ministry, [Ministry of Fisheries] are not retaining any percentage. There are lots of activities that are undertaken by the Ministry and those activities need enough funds, such as surveillance. We have cartels that go to the seas for illegal activities. We have a lot of fishing vessels that go to other countries, like Senegal, Guinea, etc. The surveillance activity that should take place

is not happening due to lack of funds. If I gave you **Le10**, but I have nothing to spend on myself sounds ridiculous. Therefore, we must work with the Ministry of Finance to allow the Ministry of Fisheries to keep a portion of the money they make, so that they can monitor what is happening in our waters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a time in one of their programmes where I suggested that we could get one or two drones to surveillance our waters, instead of spending moneys on fuel. We need to treat this as an urgent issue. We need to improve on our products. A colleague of mine told me yesterday that we are not mature for the EU market. Well, I am sure we are trying and what we are discussing has some political undertone. We have a lot to do with our Chinese counterpart and they are helping us immensely. Perhaps, what we need to do, at this point, is to tell the Minister, which we will do as a Committee, that she has to improve on the relationship between the Ministry and the industry. This will help them to have more vessels in the country. This is because one of the problems affecting the industry is inadequate fishing vessels. We need more vessels, Mr Speaker. There are people who would want to go into fishing activity, but they do not have vessels. I will ensure that the Minister provides more vessels.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing is preservation of the fish. You would agree with me that fish is one of the perishable foods that we have, but we need to preserve our fish. We now have ways of knowing the quantum of fish in our waters and this is guiding us as a country to make sure that our fishes remain in the waters. That is why we have those seasonal period for both artisanal and industrial fishing companies because it is helping us to improve the population of fish in our waters. We want to thank the Minister for that and it is going on effectively. It is also producing good dividend.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us know that illiteracy is a virus. If we continue to encourage illiteracy, it will destroy the strong foundation our leader wants to build. He has already laid the foundation, but perhaps we only realise if we continue to encourage him further. Initially, we used to have lower classes; I do not even want to go to secondary education; but in class one, children used to be asked out of their classes for fees. That practice is no more and we need to applaud the

President for that development. Schools used to seize results because of school fees. We started having dropouts from Class one. This was what contributed to this country's illiteracy. Today, we have the free education right at our doorsteps. Why are we not utilising this opportunity? Well, some of our colleagues would still want to criticise the system. However, the system is worth applauding. We have got the right person in the right place. If the President is a selfish person, he would not have thought of educating our kids from primary level to secondary level for free of cost. All of us know that if you had two or three children in school, you would find it very difficult to pay fees. Mr Speaker, for a government to pay fees for a country with very high number of kids from class 1 to SSS 3 levels is not an easy task. We must thank the President for his magnanimity. If they refused to thank the President, I will thank him for my people, for my children, for the mothers and fathers out there who have two or three kids attending schools, but the government is taking care of them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to quickly talk about something that almost everybody has spoken about it; i.e., the idea of drugs in this country. We need to think about it; we need to come together; we need to put more efforts in it as a Parliament because we are representing this country. I am sure we can combat this menace if we come together. We should not politicise the issue of drugs at all. I am happy today because the Chief Whip of the Opposition has made my day. I now know that we have people who are ready to collaborate with us in the fight against drugs. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I now call on Honorable Abdul K. Kamara from Port Loko and I give him 10 minutes.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, when you have the opportunity to speak in a situation like this, especially after two eloquent and beautiful ladies have spoken before you, you find comfort. Mr Speaker, we are here again to thank His Excellency the President for the Speech so graciously delivered to this House on that faithful day of 7th August 2025.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my intervention to this debate will be limited to two of the 'Five Big Game Changers.' I will start with the first one, which has to do

with Technology and Infrastructural Development. The second one is the Public Service Reform or revamping the Public Service Sector. Before I start, I would like to say in the Presidential Speech, the President has challenged this House in many ways. If you go to Page 2, Paragraph 6 of the Speech. With the permission of the Speaker, I read: **“As we open this new Session, let us renew our shared commitments to serve above self, to country above party, and to build a future worthy of our people's trust.”** The President, in his wisdom, realised that we need to do more in order to gain the trust the people have for us, including himself as President. In other words, what this Paragraph is saying is that the current situation we are in, as a nation, is that we are challenged in so many ways. We have a lot to improve the wellbeing of our people. A social scientist once said that when the future is blink, the President is calling on us to rebuild the trust that the people have for us. That is a challenge, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said earlier, if we move to Game Changer 4, which has to do with Technology and Infrastructure Development on Page 13, Paragraphs 114, 115 and 116, the President mentioned the strides his government has made in innovative technology, which this House must applaud him. In the 21st Century, when you talk about innovative technology, there are elements we should look at and those elements are lacking. Therefore, I want to recommend, through this House to the President for these elements to be assessed and develop a strategy that will be incorporated for us to achieve innovative technology. One of these elements is research and development which is commonly known as R&D. This is critical in achieving innovative technology. However, from what we are seeing and the direction we are going, we have developed little or nothing in terms of research and development. We need a national strategy that will lead us to innovation and improve technology in this nation. For us to reach at that level, part of my recommendation is for us to incorporate it in the system through our secondary schools to the university level that will enhance research and development. What could that system be? We should emphasise the STEM Approach, which is Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. The STEM approach will be important for

us as a nation to work and develop the mindsets of our kids in order to improve technology.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, we agree that the approach the Ministry of Education is taking with regard to STEM is good, but it needs a lot of improvement and understanding. If you go to the schools, you would discover that our children are moving away from Mathematics and even Engineering. How will you improve technology or research if you do not have the basic skills? All of us know that with STEM, you can improve on problem solving skills and you can improve on critical thinking. So, if we are not careful, we will continue with the traditional schooling system and that will continue to pose serious problems for this nation.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I move to Page 19, Paragraphs 175 and 176. We have just approved the Director General for the Sierra Leone Railway Development Regulatory Authority. We talked about the railway development and it is a good initiative. Like the previous speaker said, they are building the foundation, but we do not want to see a foundation like the Lungi Bridge, where we saw citizens of this nation with T-shirts to launch the construction of the Lungi Bridge. It will interest you to know that in the Office of the Presidential Infrastructure Initiative, the person who was in charge of that Office was all over the radio stations, explaining to citizens of this nation about the importance of that bridge, to an extent that we had to print T-shirts. Today, where is the bridge? I do not know if Dr Tambi is still in that Office, but we do not want to see another fail foundation that could lead to other problems. We have to be very careful as to what we should do when we look at projects like the Railway Project. The President is inviting the private sector to invest or participate in such projects in order to enhance development.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, Game Changer 5 is talking about revamping the public service. In 2018, when the President was in this House, he promised this nation 'disciplined leadership.' I want to see that this is achieved for the benefit of this nation. I am sure with a disciplined leadership, this nation will move forward, but if we are still holding what we hold as a nation, referencing Paragraph 6 of the President's Speech, then the challenge he made to this House is heading to nowhere. The issue of indiscipline is escalating by the day. Quite recently, we saw

what happened at the Ministry of Works, when the Minister was barely chased out of his office by his professional staff. That is gross indiscipline, Mr Speaker. Well, the other day, the Minister was here and through undertone, some of us said that the Minister has outlived his relevance in the governance architecture of this nation. We said you were made ministers during the former President and in 2018 and 2023, you were also made Minister. Come on, are you not tired? The professionals in that Ministry are asking you out of office. The President needs to take action or go back to the drawing board regarding his promises in 2018.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, quite recently, we said we wanted to revamp the public sector, but let us look at the ACC. It seems as if the ACC is in coma. Immediately after chasing the former government officials, the ACC went into coma. We need to understand the issue of out of court settlements used by the ACC and the procedures they usually use. Who is monitoring that aspect? The other day we saw on video how the ACC was displaying Billions of Leones on the tables. This nation is peaceful. I do not know who advised the ACC boss to undertake such exercise. I think he was ill-advised because you should not display huge amount of money on the tables. What was he trying to portray to the public?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about Audit Service Sierra Leone [ASSL]. According to the Speech, ASSL has covered up to **88%** of its work in exercising its authority, but where is the **12%**? Is the **12%** relates to the Office of the President, or what? We need to understand where the **12%** is. I would not go into the economy and the domestic revenue mobilisation in today's debate.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Thank you, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. Since the object of this debate is to thank His Excellency for the good work he is doing for Sierra Leoneans, I would start my intervention by saying that the ACC is working because it is still indicting people accused of corruption. You would agree with me that an NRA Officer was indicted to court last week. Again, in June 2025, an officer from the Nuclear Radiation Authority was also indicted. For someone to say the ACC is in coma, that is not correct. Since this debate started, what I have not heard from my brothers on the other hand is for them to thank the President, his government

and the people of Sierra Leone for ensuring that Members on the Opposition were paid backlog salaries for jobs that they did not do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to refer the House to Page 26, Paragraph 251. The President has asked us to be patriotic. He being the father of democracy is admonishing us on Paragraph 254. He said: **“Let us be clear - denying legitimate elections is not democratic dissent; it is a direct assault on our peace, our stability, and the very foundations of our Republic.”** It goes without saying that for you to enjoy democracy, you have to accept the will of the very people that elect you into governance. We have to start accepting honourably when we conduct elections in Sierra Leone and somebody emerges as winner, we have to acknowledge and accept the process. By so doing, our democratic process and credentials will increase. If you say electoral injustice incites Sierra Leoneans is not true at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will take the queue to drink from the well of your wisdom. I want to say thanks to the President for enacting several progressive legislations since he took over the reign of governance as President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President for repealing the Public Order Act. Part V of the Public Order Act used to be a very draconian law in Sierra Leone. The new Act has guaranteed press freedom and provides the opportunity for people to express themselves. This means you can criticise, as long as it is done objectively. People have to be seen participating in the governance activities of their country. The President has also taken the liberty to repeal the death penalty. It is another legislation this government has repealed.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, we find it difficult that the Honourable Member is referring us to legislations we have enacted in this House. They are not part of the President's Speech we are debating. He has not given us anything like a review of the laws we have enacted. We are not questioning because we are afraid to respond, but we want to heed to your advice that we have a debate that seemingly looks nationalistic, rather than creating situations where we have to respond.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Gevao, please limit your debate on the Speech.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, I always drink from the well of wisdom of Mr Speaker. I would like to refer the House to Page 28, starting from Paragraph 266 to 275, which talks about 'Access to Justice.' You cannot talk about access to justice without progressive legislations. You cannot tell me that I cannot give accolade to the President for those progressive legislations. If you do not want us to talk about the good things he is doing, then we should not thank him.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that my colleagues on the other side are trying to frustrate me, but I cannot be frustrated. I want to say thanks to His Excellency the President for appointing magistrates and judges. Contrary to what one of our colleagues said during his submission that Sierra Leone government has not trained youths in the legal profession. I want to state here that as far as the knowledge base is concerned, thirteen [13] of the newly appointed magistrates in Sierra Leone are youths below the age of thirty-five [35] years and all of them are women. They are highly educated and intelligent women who have been appointed very recently. Among the Judges of the Superior Court of Judicature who were appointed a couple of months ago, I can boastfully state that we have ten [10] women who are serving as Judges in the Superior Court of Judicature. For those who do not understand what that one means, it is the hierarchy of courts, from the Supreme Court to the High Court.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must say that there are lots of debates over the President's statement, when he said we should take steps to apply the PR System in the Executive Arm. I will read that for the benefit of the public. He said we should have a national dialogue to discuss around PR System being extended to the Executive. This does not mean power sharing arrangement. Power sharing is when you win power and you take part of your powers and give them to other person or people as per law provides. When the President mentioned the PR System, what he was basically saying was that you get what you earn during the elections. Most of you are here today because of the PR System and the seats you have are those that you got. On our side, we are here because of the PR System and the number we have here is based on the PR System. So, if it is to be extended to the Executive Arm of Government, it is not necessarily mean that the SLPP will share political

powers. It simply means that the percentage of votes you will get is going to determine your representation in the Executive Arm. The debate about the President is suggesting a power sharing deal was not what he meant in his Speech.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has acknowledged, in his Speech, the importance of PR System. I am sure all of us in this House have been enjoying smooth transition as a nation. We no longer spend too much to conduct by-elections. The father of democracy advised that we look for ways and means to reduce tension in Sierra Leone. I will tell you that before this time, Sierra Leoneans used to lose their lives during by-elections. People used to burn down houses of their opponents, but due to the reintroduction of the PR System, if need arises to fill a vacant parliamentary seat, automatically the second person on their party list occupies the seat. Today, Sierra Leoneans hardly know about the swearing-in of new Member[s] of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the President for the successes in his foreign policy. I will say President Bio is not only one of the best Presidents that this nation has produced, but a President who is highly blessed and favoured by God; a President that God is using to consolidate peace, not only in Sierra Leone and West Africa, but Africa and the World at large. I know this is not a surprise to the Opposition MPs regarding the appointment of President Maada Bio as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of ten[C-10] on the UN Security Council Reform. The President was using this position to launder the image of Sierra Leone in the international arena. I want to thank the President for hosting the C-10 retreat in Freetown. It was during the C-10 retreat that was hosted in Freetown the President was able to get all African Heads of States to speak with one voice in terms of having a permanent seat in the United Nations.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to thank God for choosing a Sierra Leonean in the name of President Bio, who for the first time, is elected Chairman of ECOWAS.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, for the sake of clarity, the C-10 was initially chaired by former President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma before President Maada Bio.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: I am saying thanks to President Bio. I did not say Maada Bio was the first person to chair the C-10; I am saying thanks to President Bio for chairing the C-10. I also said that the outcome of that retreat resulted in having a singular voice for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. I did some research on the 2017 Presidential Speech delivered in Parliament and because of Paragraph 254, under the energy sector... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: He was saying he would not say thanks to the former President. Does that mean Members of the Opposition should not say thanks to the current President?

THE SPEAKER: Honorable Mohamed Gevao, you have one more minute Thank you.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: The object of this debate is to say thank you to His Excellency the President, Dr Julius Maada Bio. We are not here to thank former President, Dr Ernest Koroma. If you want me to mention him, I will take a look at his Speech. On Page 11, Paragraph 60, the former President said: **"At the same time, we have commissioned a hybrid system of solar and hydro power to provide uninterrupted electricity to the river number two community in the Western Area."** This was never commissioned and therefore I cannot say thanks to him. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Aminata Sesay

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am going to start my debate with Game Changer number 5, which talks about revamping the public service. The Public Service needs to be accountable and transparent. It lost trust in this government, which we are also part of. I refer you to Paragraph 183, where the President said public service transformation must be rooted in integrity, transparency and accountability. I am going to read a statement which I know that all of us are familiar with and relate it to the 'no scarce cow' mantra. I will inform the general public and the international community that on no account, our country be used either as a direct transit point or final destination for the international trade of narcotics. This was a statement made by Ernest Bai Koroma during the time of the cocaine plane that landed at the Lungi International Airport. I am talking about this

because when we talk about accountability, this is what the leaders say to reassure the public that this country is not going to be used as a transit point or a definite destination for drugs. We were waiting for your President, Julius Maada Bio, to say the same. There have issues of drugs being linked to this government and whenever we decide to talk about it in this Well, we are being challenged by the Speaker that we should save the dignity of Sierra Leone. This is not the way we should save the dignity of Sierra Leone; the dignity of Sierra Leone would have been saved had the President stood his grounds the way Ernest Bai Koroma did. If President Maada Bio had issued out strong statements and stood his grounds, he would have redeemed all of us from this menace. As we speak, we are still waiting for a statement from the President where he would tell us what happened with the ship that docked at black Johnson.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us talk about our ambassador being caught in Guinea. We cannot hide these things because the public knows about this more than you and I know. In fact, before the news was read out, the people have already started writing on social media; and even when the government tried to refute the information, they had to accept that it was true because the Guinean Government revealed the truth. Like the Acting Leader of Government Business said earlier that we are also part of this government. Therefore, I am advising the other side to take notes of these points. One thing I would like to give credit to this President is that he listens. He is a man that listens, but it is unfortunate that the people that should advise him do not want to listen. This is why they are unable to tell him the right thing to do. Your own role here would have been to listen cautiously from the Opposition and the public, and work with the President for better results. That is what we want to see you doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am also going to talk about a very critical area that I am so passionate about; i.e., the health sector. All of us can attest to the fact that whatever the President is doing, he cannot achieve the desired results because of failure from our own part. I am not blaming the President because he has genuine intention to improve the health sector. The Minister of Health has a lot of questions to answer. With the leave of the Speaker, Paragraph 60 reads: **"A**

healthy population is essential to national prosperity.” He did not say a healthy population is essential to SLPP’s growth, but he said ‘to national prosperity.’ This means it is our business and we should treat it cautiously. As we speak, the latest audit report points out so many issues relating to our health sector.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of the issues in that 2023 Audit Report can be addressed by the Speaker and the MPs. We can intervene to make a positive difference in the sector. The report spoke about not having symmetry machines in the hospitals. Some of these machines are very cheap and for those who may not know, they are very important in determining the level of treatment to be administered. All of know that the level of oxygen should be between 98 and 100 and this is the machine that determines whether the person has between 95 and 100 or below. This is very important, Mr Speaker. If the oxygen level drops, it will be a disaster; and even if we manage to resuscitate the patient, he/she will be left in a vegetative state due to the lack of oxygen for one minute. Some of the other issues highlighted in the report are lack of blood pressure machines. The President has a 166 beds hospital called the Julius Maada Excellence Center. This is brand new hospital, but if you go there now, you would find more than 100 equipment that could have been missing. What I am trying to say here is not the building that we want; we need the equipment for the staff to do their work.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Point of Order, Mr Speaker. A few days ago, I sent you a text message that I was going to the hospital. I have worked in the hospital for over 25 years in this country. She is talking about two instruments, the Pulse Oxsimeter, which checks the level of oxygen in one’s body. This instrument is in all hospitals. The other instrument she mentioned is the blood pressure machine, which is also in all the hospitals. This is false allegations she is making here.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, this is the House of Parliament. If one MP is talking, please give that MP the chance to conclude. The Honourable Member raised some issues, which he is trying to respond to. Let us listen to him before we go back to her. Why are we shouting?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Honourable Speaker, for an MP to make such sweeping statements with no statistical evidence is totally wrong. If we go back to

the health sectors, she has been working as a psychiatric nurse; and in the area she has been working in the hospital, is an excluded area, compared to making general statement about the whole health sector in our country. I believe that she should advise herself in making such statement.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This shows that the Chairman of the Health Committee has not been reading the audit report. I refer you to Pages 125 to 138 of the audit report. The Audit report has been debated in this Well and out of this Well. We should know that when the Audit Report is brought here, it is tabled by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] and the PAC conducts further investigations into the AG's Report in the form of public hearings. We are not debating the audit report here; we can challenge it and the debate will not end.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, couple of minutes ago when Honourable Gevao referenced a statement made by the former President in his 2017 Presidential Address to Parliament. The audit report is a document belonging to Parliament, but we do not have ample opportunity to pick points from the audit report. Therefore, it is very un-procedural or un-parliamentary for MPs to be prevented from referencing the audit report. The audit report is presented to Parliament and it is not forbidden for Members of Parliament to quote from it.

THE SPEAKER: Leaders, please sit down. Honourable Members, I am sure you all have your rules. I want you to read S.O.35[4]. It says: **"During a sitting, all Members shall be silent or shall confer only in undertone."** I want everyone to be quiet or silent. S.O.35[3] states: **"Members shall not read books, newspapers, letters or other documents in their places, save such as relate to the business before Parliament."** The business before Parliament today is the Presidential Speech. This is why most of the time I keep telling you to be guided. I do not want to go into the details. Honourable Aminata Sesay, please be guided.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I commend the President for saying that we are investing heavily in hospital infrastructure, key projects, including the 166 bed of Julius Maada Bio Excellence Center at Lumley, and the modernisation of regional and district health centers. I am saying the infrastructural development is

good, but we are talking about small instruments that can be bought a million times to make real life changes. I referenced the audit report because I could not think of any better evidence to tell the President what I was trying to say. Mr Speaker, no matter what you say about the former Auditor General, Madam Laura Taylor Pearce's incident, the audit report cannot be questioned because even the President relies on it. So, let us give our regards to the audit reports. The recommendations in that report are very profound because they were not done in bipartisan manner; they were done at national level.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President also identifies the shortages in the skilled and specialist doctors. We need more trained and qualified doctors and nurses. The problem we have is not the President, but the people around the President, such as the Ministers who have been appointed to do these jobs. Health is a national issue and we should treat it with the utmost seriousness. As we speak, there is a hospital at Loko Masama Chiefdom, which was opened about two or three years ago. On the outside, the hospital looks new, but when you go inside, the beds do not have bed sheets; people used to bring their bed sheets from their homes. If you walk in some of these hospitals, you can even notice the risk of infections. You can easily contract infection if you are not careful. I am saying taking your bed sheets to the hospitals is very risky because the risk of contracting infections is very high. This can be deadly and we must do something.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, he also talks about inadequate oxygen. I can give a personal account in respect of oxygen cylinder used in the hospitals. I have been at Connaught Hospital with my elder brother who was struggling to breathe. He is an Asthma patient; they had to switch off the oxygen machine and left him to die in order to save a Lebanese family whose son was also suffering from anaphylaxis. This is because that was the only available machine at that time. This is my own personal experience and I can prove this anytime we are talking about some of these issues. How can Sierra Leone get to a point that we cannot provide oxygen when it is urgently needed? When do we make a decision to take oxygen from Honourable Aminata and give it to Honourable Abdul K. Kamara or to choose from one person to the other? How do you decide to save one civilian and allow the other to die? I know

we are a developing country and there are a lot of issues to address, but I want the President to consider this very seriously. I would never pray to witness a situation where a nurse makes a decision to take an oxygen machine from a dying patient to save another dying patient. That is happening today in this country and right in my presence. If you say we should not talk about some of these issues, I do not know why we are here in the first place.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Aminata Sesay, that allegation is serious.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Very serious, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Did you make any report about it?

HON. AMINATA SESAY: I did not make any report at that time.

THE SPEAKER: Why?

HON. AMINATA SESAY: This is because I was told that it was the only oxygen cylinder they had. The patient was an asthma patient. Sometimes they can manage with limited oxygen, as opposed to someone who is suffering from prophylaxis reaction. So, the priority was very clear, but how can we get to a point where a referral hospital, such as the Connaught Hospital, had only one cylinder.

HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE: This is very serious, but we have the Committee on Health that is overseeing the Ministry of Health. We should not just make such allegations.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is the name of the hospital?

HON. AMINATA SESAY: It is Connaught Hospital, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I wish to treat this very seriously.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Mr Speaker, this is happening every day.

THE SPEAKER: I want the leadership of this Parliament to investigate this allegation. It is very serious and I would also like to know the Ward.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: I am sure Ward Two or Three, but I will let you know the exact Ward.

THE SPEAKER: Please give us the details. Mr Clerk, by next week, we have to summon that particular hospital to come here. The leadership will personally investigate this issue. We cannot sweep this under the carpet.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: We will have to investigate this matter. Honourable Member, please give all the details to the Clerk of Parliament, so that he can summon the relevant parties to be here next week. I will personally sit as chair of that Committee to investigate that particular matter.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate your decision. Mr Speaker, whenever issues of such nature are discussed, it simply means we are not telling stories; we are saying what is happening out there on a daily basis. If the other side had been listening, even to opposition whip here, he has point these issues day in day out. Mr Speaker, without referring much to the audit report, I also have something to say about the ambulances. I can confirm here that there is only one ambulance at the Jui Government Hospital. In the event there is an emergency and this ambulance broke down or is not available, it will be a serious disaster. Sometimes the ambulance is used by the Hospital Secretary for private use because he does not have a vehicle. He is using the only ambulance at Jui Government Hospital to go to work. These are the things I am talking about, Mr Speaker. It is not the vision of the President for some of these things to happen. Let us perform our oversight functions effectively.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time is up, but I will give you two more minutes.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Clerk, please take note.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: The issues are many, but you need to look at them one after the other. Another issue that always comes up is the one relating to the blood bank at the Connaught Hospital. It has been in existence for the past ten years and if it breaks down, all the blood will waste. All of us know how expensive that product is, but these are the issues we are dealing with.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have not got enough time to cover all the areas I wanted to talk about. However, I want to continue my intervention with employment. The President is trying and I know he meant well for our youth, but if we are to achieve this, the leadership of Parliament needs to perform their role very seriously. Over a year ago, I conducted an oversight activity on a local company known as LEONE ROCK at Pepel. The workers complained a lot about the lack of toilet facilities, clean drinking water and for not given the same food to managers which the Chinese were eating. Owing to this development, the Company threatened to lay off over 500 workers for simply saying they needed toilet facility. They had to use the bush to defecate.

THE SPEAKER: I think that has been sorted out.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: It has been sorted at my own detriment because I have been told that the CEO, Mr Gilbert, has been complaining about me to the leadership. I am however waiting for that meeting to be summoned. I advocated for these people not to work for twelve hours shift without toilet facility. I said they deserved to drink clean water and eat the same food as the Chinese who are working there. When the women were using the bush to defecate the Chinese men would use their cameras to record the women while using the toilet and made mockery of them. Owing to the fact that I took up this issue, I was described as problem maker. I know that I am an Opposition MP, but this issue is now with the Leader of Government Business. This issue caused me a lot of headache. They involved all sorts of media houses during a meeting I attended with SLPP MPs and the Minister of Labour. I attended the meeting for two days, but the issue remained unresolved. I went to the meeting with a journalist from Parliament and the whole event was covered. Despite the fact that the leadership is aware of this, they nonetheless insisted that I meet with the CEO, who has been threatening to hold me accountable for the losses his company suffered during the three-day strike. I will bring that to your notice, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, inasmuch as the President has good intention to have the youths employed, our youths are vulnerable to these companies and they are being misused. As we speak, I have more than fifty complaints. There is a young

man whose three fingers were chopped off by the machine he was using; and instead of being taken to the hospital on that same day, he was given first aid. This does not fall within the category of first aid treatment. He was only given first aid treatment and he was later told to continue his shift. This is what I am talking about.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please put all these concerns on paper and submit to me.

HON. AMINATA SESAY: Thank you very much. I will leave you with the same message from President Bio; to tell you that I resonate with him; I know what he is trying to do, but there are people who do not mean well for this nation. I leave you with his statement in Paragraph 111, which says: "... **stay focused, stay healthy, stay resilient. You are not only the leaders of tomorrow - you are leaders of today. Your courage, discipline, and vision will shape the Sierra Leone we all dream of. Do not let drugs steal your future. Your hands must build; your minds must create; your voices must lead.**" I thank you, Mr Speaker.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, inasmuch as we I reckon with what you are saying, you were here in this Well when the Minister of Water Resources explained certain things to us. Even though I was Chairman, I also explained to this House and I know that she approached the Committee regarding these issues. Sometimes when you are on the Ruling Bench, you do not understand what we go through dealing with government Ministers of your government.

THE SPEAKER: We only have one government of the Republic of Sierra Leone. If you have difficulties with ministries, escalate your difficulties to the leadership. If the leadership cannot resolve them, please bring them to me. As we speak, nobody has told me anything related to difficulties encountered with ministries. Nobody has ever told me and I assumed those difficulties did not exist; otherwise you should have escalated these issues to me.

HON. EMILIA L. TONGI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. First of all, I want to say thanks to the President for such a wonderful and excellent Speech; it is a Speech full of encouraging projects. I want to pray that President Julius Maada Bio

continues this direction. He has done so much for this country and sometimes I feel honoured as Honourable Member of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am going to do something that is unique; maybe nobody has ever done it in this Well. His Excellency has done very well for this country. What he has done has never happened for the past sixty years. When I was growing up, the late Siaka P. Stevens was running this country. I have seen different heads of states in Sierra Leone; but I have not seen other legacies compared to His Excellency Dr Julius Maada Bio. He is one of the best Presidents in this country. We should not shy to say it because he has done so much in building classrooms, training teachers, construction of bridges all over Sierra Leone, enactment of progressive laws, especially those that encourage or favour women. He ensured increase in the number of female representation in elective positions, especially in Parliament. We were seventeen in this Parliament, but the President did everything humanly possible to increase women's participation in Parliament. It was not easy to drop eloquent Honourable Members just to increase the number of women in Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there was a railway in this country from Freetown to Pendembu and Kailahun District. The railway was serving very well, but the question is what happened to that railway? It was sold through orders from above. Today, this President is trying to restore that glory once again, and I hope and pray that we introduce policies that will prevent government from selling government property. Almost all the structures belonging to government have been sold and we have resorted to renting structures to be used as offices. Why are we renting structures when we had many structures in this country? Those structures were not meant to be sold at all. We need to stop selling government property. If government officials are not using those structures, we can convert them into offices, instead of selling them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President has increased the enrollment of girls in schools and they are doing extremely well. The President has also reduced maternal death in this country. We are now number one in the world. All of us know that in 2018, this Government took over the country with a fragmented economy.

The president did everything within his power to continue to pay salaries to civil servants in this country without delays. I am so impressed about the President's magnanimity. I wrote him a letter and with the leave of the Speaker, I would like to read it. It says:

'Dear Honourable President,

I am writing to express my heartfelt appreciation and admiration for your tireless efforts in leading our nation. Your dedication in improving the lives of Sierra Leoneans is truly commendable. Your leadership has brought hope and inspiration to our country, and I am grateful for your commitment to our national progress. Your vision for a prosperous and peaceful Sierra Leone is evident in the initiatives you have implemented. Thank you for your selfless service. I pray for continuing guidance and wisdom as you continue to lead the nation.'

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about health. As you all know, health is not political and we need a healthy nation. The President is doing very well, but every MP in this Well is also responsible to make sure our people get good health. I know that our salaries are low and there are people who are looking up to us for help. However, I can state here that a lot of MPs in this Parliament have done extremely well with the little resources in their possession. I am not saying they made it possible for us to reduce the maternal death worldwide, but MPs like Honourable Mohamed Gevao has constructed a health center. I have built an apartment for doctors and nurses, and a health center in hard to reach areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a lot of maternal deaths took place in remote areas because women in labour used to walk seven to ten kilometers to locate the nearest health center or hospital. I am a mother of two kids and I know the pains women go through. There is no way you can compare it to any other pain in this world. Therefore, a lot of women have lost their lives in the process of giving birth. A lot of babies have also died. Personally, I helped the President to reduce maternal deaths in Sierra Leone through the structures I constructed. I would like to encourage my colleagues MPs to also help this country. Our people need our help. We do not have enough money and we are not here to make money; we are here to listen and to help our people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about infrastructure, especially the roads. I want to inform you that for over forty years Kissi Bendu was APC dominated. I am sure **90%** to **98%** of the people of Kissi Bendu were APC because we had excellent promises to construct the Kailahun Road. However, they could not fulfill that promise, but Dr Julius Maada Bio has done it for us. That road will be commissioned in March 2026. I am also sure that the Koindu Road has also been commissioned. So, this is how the APC lost control of that area. I am sending special thanks to his Excellency for this development. What else can the APC offer that will convince us to change our minds?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about transportation. Transportation is another area where our people have been suffering. The parliamentary Committee on Transport needs to be active. Our people have been harassed by those manning the checkpoints along the highways. They only focus on extorting moneys from the people, instead of checking for licences and insurance. They stopped these vehicles and ask for money; and at the end of the day, the passengers pay the consequences. I am asking the police and SLRA to intervene and help the situation. The petrol price has been reduced, but the transport fares remain the same. When you take transport from Freetown to the provinces, you would have to pay the consequences because of the expensive nature of transport fares. If you ask them, they usually make reference to what the police are extorting from them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about Kush. The issue about Kush is all over the country. I am just from France and I can tell you that there are other drugs worse than Kush. When they take those drugs, they become like zombies. If you are an adult and you see people taking Kush, you have a responsibility to perform. In American, those who disturb their parents as a result of the influence of drugs are usually taken to the prisons for weeks. Such action can reduce criminal activities in a country. This is how America tries to educate their students. Therefore, Kush is your business and it is our business. What we need to do is to sensitise these kids by telling them the dangers of drugs. We do not have the infrastructure and the logistics to take these boys wherein they can be treated; S.O.[2] 'tortoise wan box, but e hand short.' We are not like others, but what we can

do in our different institutions is to sensitise our youths on the dangers of drugs. Our youths are dying and many of them are mad due to the influence of drugs. So, what else can we do? Government is doing its bit, but it cannot control an adult who wants to go to the night clubs and drink. This is a collective responsibility that all of us should put our ideas together. I think this strategy could be good. We also need doctors to come together and chat the way forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most of these drugs are brought to Sierra Leone by road or by sea; and mostly at night. If we cannot stop them, those who are caught should be heavily punished. We should put in place draconian laws regarding importers of drugs into Sierra Leone. They should be given life imprisonment, Mr Speaker. I call these drugs 'genocide drugs' because of the mass killings.

THE SPEAKER: I give you two more minutes.

HON. EMLIA L. TONGI: These are dangerous drugs they are bringing in this country and they are destroying our youths, including primary school kids. They are also taking these drugs, Mr Speaker. It is something we need to sit together and have a conversation. I would like to be part of that meeting, so that we can find lasting solutions to this problem. The scenes under the Lumley Bridge are sympathetically fearful. Drugs have become flus and we need to do something very fast. We have to involve the soldiers or police in combating this menace. I would like to thank the Speaker and also salute the President for his good job.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Emilia L. Tongi.

HON. IBRAHIM A. BANGURA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My name is Honourable Ibrahim Aziz Bangura, representing the people of Port Loko District. On behalf of the people of Port Loko District I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President for the Speech he graciously delivered in this Honourable House on the 7th August 2025.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to preface my debate on the following areas: transportation, roads, water and sanitation and sports. I would like to start with air transportation, which is on Page 18, Paragraph 162. I want to thank the President for the resumption of direct flights from Freetown to the United

Kingdom [UK]. This is a laudable initiative and a step in the right direction. That is why I want to call on Sierra Leoneans to patronise with Air Sierra Leone, so that we can help to achieve their objectives. I also want to seize this opportunity to call on the President to be using Air Sierra Leone whenever he travels to the United Kingdom. This is because that will build the love and confidence of Sierra Leoneans. The perception of people is mistrust on Air Sierra Leone. I have used it and I know that the flight is comfortable. I want to urge all Sierra Leoneans to patronise with Air Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me now move to sea transportation. This is stated on Page 17, Paragraph 152. I think this government has not done much on sea transportation. I am one of those sea line MPs. I came from Lungi and we all know the problems we encounter with the ferries. It was all over social media when the ferries encountered breakdowns on the high sea, leaving our people at the mercy of God for their survival. The ferries we are using are too old. They can no longer stand the test of time. Most times when our people are using these ferries, they develop mechanical problems on the high seas. Mr Speaker, I am sure the safest and cheapest form of transportation for our people travelling to and fro Lungi is through the ferry. So, I want to call on His Excellency to see how best he can be of help to us in terms of procuring brand new ferries for us. In his 2020 Presidential Address in this Honourable House of the Fifth Parliament, he promised to procure two ferries that would be navigating the Kissy Ferry Terminal and Tagrin Terminal.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it may interest you to know that we have a good number of our brothers and sisters who are residing in Kaffu Bullom Chiefdom, but they are attending secondary schools and tertiary institutions in Freetown, but whenever we have mechanical problems with the ferries, they are unable to cross over to Freetown. Sometimes some of them would try to use wooden boats as alternative means, but it is risky and dangerous. This has resulted in losing precious lives of our brothers and sisters on the high seas. Owing to overcrowding and high cost of rent, people are now relocating to Kaffu Bullom with their families and some of them are still working in Freetown. They are also victims of this problem and we need to do something about it. Anytime there are mechanical failures, they would

have to stay in their homes for that period. Some of them have been receiving query letters from their superiors for failing to report for duty. I do want to talk about the Lungi Bridge because year in year out, we have new episodes. We have the Chinese episode and we now have the American episode. However, we are anxiously waiting to see the full commencement of the Lungi Bridge.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me move to water and sanitation, which is stated on Page 10, Paragraph 87. With the leave of the Speaker, it says: **"Access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene is the basic right and essential for health, education, climate resilience and development."** In 2024, SLAWCO awarded a contract to a Sierra Leonean based company owned by Rodney Michael. The company was supposed to construct pipe borne water facility in Kaffu Bullom. I was there during the launch of that particular project, but since the launch of that project in June 2024, I am yet to see any semblance of work being carried out. The contractors promised to commence work as soon as the project is launched. You would agree with me that Lungi is transforming from a mere cosmopolitan to a city. However, there are many benchmarks that can transform a community to a city. Some of them are provision of pipe borne water, good roads, sustainable electricity, etc. As we speak, we do not have pipe borne water in Lungi and our roads are very bad. The electricity aspect is manageable, but it is not easy for the people of Lungi at all. These projects are being funded by the government of Sierra Leone and it is a **\$25mln** project. Currently, if you interfaced with these contractors, they would tell you that they have not received funds from the government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about sports and this is stated on Page 11, Paragraph 95. The newly elected SLFA President, in his maiden speech, revealed that Sierra Leone and Lungi are the hubs of football. Well, I can confirm that the statement is true, because if you had checked Premier League teams in this country, you would figure out one or two players who are coming from Lungi. We also have three regular players in the national team from Lungi. This shows that we are supporting football in this country. However, what we are lacking in Lungi is modern football field. The SLFA President said that if you want to be part of the Premier League, you need to have a well-structured football field as stated in the

FIFA laws. The football field must have artificial turf. Lungi is one of the Chiefdoms that has a Premier League team known as the 'Bullom Stars,' but they are unable to play their home games because of this reason. Most of our home games are played outside our community and that is why we are almost relegated. However, since we do not have division one leagues playing, we survive the relegation, and we are in the Premier League once more. Therefore, I want to call on the newly elected SLFA President, Mr Babadi Kamara, the Minister of Sports and the National Sports Authority [NSA] Director to help us construct a well-structured football pitch, so that we can be able to play our home games in our communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to end my intervention with roads. This is mentioned on Page 15, Paragraph 141. The roads in Lungi are very deplorable, especially the road linking Talebu Junction and Kona Keli. Again, the Bridge that links Benke Community and Titafu is a deathtrap. We want to see how this government can help us, so that these roads can be fixed. If you looked at the Mahera Road in Rotifunk, it houses one of the most densely populated markets, but the road also is in a deplorable state. Therefore, I would like to call on the President to help us fix those roads. I want to hang on the lips of the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of Government Business that those who have been working at the airport should be paid their severance benefits. On that note, I want to thank you very much for this opportunity.

HON. HINDOLO M. GEVAO: Mr Speaker, with regard terminal benefits, I can assure you that the Ministry of Labour is doing the calculations and once the figure is confirmed and Justice Lamin delivered his judgment as the presiding judge, everything will be okay. This should not be an issue at all and I am sure there is no litigation. You do not have to go back and forth with an employer.

THE SPEAKER: This is almost becoming a liability if they do not pay. Honourable Ibrahim Aziz Bangura has made my day. I will urge Honourable Members to take a page from him. Honourable Members, when you are debating, please bring out the issues that are affecting your people. You should not just criticise the President's Speech and you should also be talking in favour of the government, but refer to those specific issues affecting your people. I have had a discussion with the Clerk

that by next year, we are going to create programmes for Committees that if you mention issues affecting your community, they will be factored in the programmes of that specific Committee to make sure that the Committee looks into that particular issue. We are not going to leave the Committees just like that; we are going to create programmes for these Committees to be looking at specific issues that arose during Presidential/Budget debates. We will tell any Committee to look at five issues and present your findings to this House. Therefore, when you debate, please refer to specific matters affecting your community.

Honourable Members, we know that for those on the Ruling Bench, they want to say good things about the Speech; yes, say your good things about the Speech and what the President has done, you also have to reference specific issues you would want Parliament to look into. The Opposition should also do the same. We know that as Members of the Opposition party, your role is to keep the government on its toes regarding certain things through criticisms, but you should also proffer recommendations to issues affecting your community. This will enable us to compile all your concerns and create programmes for the respective Committees to look into them. This is why we are here debating the President's Speech. I am still thinking about taking parliamentary sittings to Bo and elsewhere. We are thinking very seriously around this in order to ensure that we go to Bo for the finance debate. So, we encourage our people by inviting them to come and listen to us. Maybe after Bo, we can go to Kenema and even Makeni. This is because Honourable Sallieu Osman Sesay, commonly called SOS, would want to see his people and they in turn would want to listen to him saying things that are affecting the community in Bombali District. We are thinking about going to the provinces to conduct our parliamentary sittings. Our people deserve to know what is happening in Parliament and the kind of debates we normally have as MPs. We need to tell them, during our debates, that it is not the role of Parliament to construct bridges or roads, but we are there to advocate for these facilities and that the burden on MPs is too much, to the extent that MPs are almost always indebted. This is because you have to prove yourself based on certain promises you have made to them. You have to go all out to ensure that you fulfill those promises. We are also amenable to doing some of these things

if they allow us to include them in the Constitution. If you want MPs to undertake primary developments, we should put that in a new Constitution to say in every financial year, MPs should be given certain amount of money to undertake primary developments; otherwise they should leave MPs alone. I call on Honourable Marry Conteh for his contribution.

[Suspension of S.O 5[2] being 12:00 noon]

HON. ABDUL S. MARRY-CONTEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. I want to thank the President for this Speech. We have to use this Speech to develop this country. He made it clear in reminding us how important this Parliament is as stated in Paragraph 4; It says: **"I want every Sierra Leonean to know this Parliament matters. Your work matters. Your decisions touch every household, every farmer, trader, teacher and students striving for a better life. Because of this, our people rightly expect us to act with integrity, purpose and compassion at all times."** He said compassion at all times, integrity at all times, even in debate. I am not going to make your work difficult; I am not going to talk about John the Baptist. I am not going to engage in any kind of political Ping-Pong because it has not helped this country and it will never help this country. It is about calling things by their real names and address them as a Parliament. We are supposed to represent the people of this country, regardless of where they are. So, let us start addressing perennial problems.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our Civil or Public Service has been manned by a culture of routinised sluggishness and that is clearly evident in what we see in the galleries. This is because some of the MDAs were supposed to be here, but they are not here. This is the routinised sluggishness we are talking about and their inability to respond instantly, decisively, boldly and objectively to pressing issues. We lack all of these. Governments come and go, but the Public Service remains. This means whatever we do, even if we write the best Constitution for this country, if we do not have a well-structured Public Service, it is a fruitless endeavour. The operation will be successful, but the patient will die, regardless of our experience in the Public Service. There have been efforts to make the change we all seek. In Paragraphs 177 to 180, it is clear that the Civil Service Code has been revised for the first time since

2011. Today, we have the 2024 Civil Service Code of Practice and Parliament is also looking forward to a Public Service Bill and the President's assurance of having a whole Chapter dedicated to the Public Service in the revised draft Constitution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President mentioned another area that has to do with deepening our democracy. This is very important and it is mentioned in the area of civic engagement and public information. It is unfortunate that the Minister of Information and Civic Education has left us, but his actions are all over the place, but in a positive sense. In Paragraph 286 of the Speech, the President mentioned the national civic education and engagement initiative; be it the Ruling or Opposition Party Members, they have participated in different town hall meetings all over this country. We have used that opportunity to engage our citizens in a meaningful dialogue on the progress being made in this Parliament in support of the Executive. I think we should learn from that, including the issue of electoral reforms. We must not shy away from it at all; we can discuss about it with our people. I want to believe that most times we have forty unfiltered questions that are usually asked in some of these sessions. I think it will give us a good sense of understanding how we have to progress going forward.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues debated the issue of the Youth Employment Scheme yesterday. Of course, we are also seeing some evidence based of that debate here. With the leave of the Speaker, I want to take that evidence based debate to another level. I brought with me beneficiaries of the Youth in Fisheries Project. Please allow them to be acknowledged from Murray Town. I have John Stevens, aka Opoku; Michael Kargbo, aka Movado; Alfred Williams, aka Father Logo and Augustine Robin Coker. These are young men who have benefited from the fishing project; and today, they are far away from crimes. In fact, they are ambassadors in the fight against Kush in their community. As we celebrate those that will be graduating by the end of the year from the different universities, we also have to celebrate those who have made use of the little opportunity they are given in order to survive in their communities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, much has been said on the issue of Kush, this means the government has major responsibility because government is always

blamed. However, I think we have also failed to remind our youths their responsibilities. There are many feelings of entitlements among our youths. It is clear that we have to tell them, inasmuch as it is harsh, but we have to tell them the hard or real truth; the inconvenient truth that nobody owes you anything, only your parents can give you free lunch. Outside there, nobody listens to your excuses. They think about your values; the more value offered the more reward you will get. All of us have to come together and fight for the youths. They must be reminded of their responsibilities and how they can make meaningful contribution to national developments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the President touched on the area of social welfare and protection. Again, I say kudos to this Parliament for our meaningful contributions in ensuring the passage of social protection laws. This also shows clear synergy between the Executive and the Legislative Arms.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the mining sector has been a success stories, but I will refer those successes as partial successes. This means the Mines and Minerals Development Act, 2022 makes some kind of obligation to these companies to pay the host communities some money, but we are falling short. Our colleague from Tonkolili District raised this point on how we can ensure accountability in expenditure. As a Parliament, it is our oversight responsibility to look into how these moneys are utilised. This is very important, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will now conclude with the ongoing discussions on electoral reforms. Page 27, Paragraph 264 is very clear on this issue, but maybe we have seen different interpretations of that particular Paragraph. With your leave, Mr Speaker, it says: **“Leaders entrusted with the nation's future, it is our solemn duty to champion political reforms that unite rather than divide. To this end, we must reignite a meaningful dialogue on adopting a proportional representation, not only within parliamentary elections, but extending into the makeup of the Executive Branch and the wider public sector.”** The President asked us to do something which I think has been so difficult. He said ‘we must reignite a meaningful dialogue.’ However, what I have experienced and heard has not been any meaningful dialogue. As the lawmakers, we should not

only lead by example, we should lead by good example because we are in a better position to understand these issues than our constituents. So, let us engage in a meaningful dialogue and that is what the President has asked us to do; otherwise, we are not making any sense.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this brings me to Paragraph 255, when the President said: "Sierra Leone has chosen the path of democracy. We must therefore reject the toxic language of division, the false comfort of conspiracy and the reckless narratives that undermine our unity." I want to state that unity is strength. Sometimes what we say here will be taken as policy statement. Yes, we talk local, but we go global because we live in a global village. What we present out there is what they see as the lead branders of our country. I am sure you are not oblivious of the fact there are also negative things happening in the United States of America. You have war veterans begging in the streets of New York, but when they come out there, they talk about the American dreams. That is why most of us use the 'Temple Run' to go to the United States of America. We have our problems; they are not green; and they are not red. Our views must be Sierra Leonean views.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will conclude with Paragraph 313, where the President said: **"Our development journey continues; peace remains delicate; democracy requires constant vigilance; prosperity demands courage and sacrifice."** Honourable Members, we have to put up the hardest courage and sacrifice to save this country. Thank you very much, and God bless you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I will allow two more MPs to debate and we adjourn. Mr Leader of the Opposition, please select two MPs and the Leader of Government Business should also select two MPs.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, today, I am going to be neither cantankerous nor controversial or verbose. I am going to be very brief because the area I am going to talk about in Paragraph 264 has already been alluded to by previous speakers. Therefore, I will wait for a more propitious time we will have the opportunity to deal with this matter comprehensively. This is what the President is asking us to do as leaders entrusted with the future of this nation. It is our solemn duty to champion political reforms that unite rather than divide us. The President

has asked us to reignite a meaningful dialogue in adopting proportional representation, not only within parliamentary elections, but extending into the makeup of Executive Branch and Wider Public Service. First, let me thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to debate, including my leadership. However, the most important thanks go to the President for a subdued Address he delivered in this Parliament on 7th August 2025.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stated earlier that the area I wanted to contribute on has already been discussed and this is why I am going to be very brief. I thank the President for this Speech, but I must also to thank the Speaker for the positive transformation he is ushering to this Parliament. As a first time MP, the changes I have seen in this Parliament are enormous. People have spoken a lot about your ingenuity and your ability to hold people together. I pray that you continue in this direction. You have been a fair umpire, holding both sides of the aisles together in making sure that nobody is advantaged. I want you to continue doing the good work you have started. I am sure we will have ample time for us to debate on power sharing. However, what the President said in his Speech is contrary to what my learned friend said. In a Presidential System, the President is elected separately from Parliament. Therefore, once the President is elected, he has the responsibility to form his own government. The question about power sharing is that an individual who succeeds in an election should be prevented from implementing the manifesto of his party by sharing his powers with the party that did not win. That is the question we are going to consider. One of the features of parliamentary system of government is power sharing. In the UK, for instance, after a general election, if no party gets the number of votes require to form a government, they then look forward to the other parties to join the leading party. So, power sharing is not a feature of Presidential Executive System like what we have in Israel or the United States. It is a characteristic of parliamentary system of government, such as the UK, Germany, South Africa and other countries. These are constitutional issues and we will deal with them at that level. We have been challenged by the President to consider that seriously and it is our duty as parliamentarians. Mr Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable Tamba Kellie. I am happy to inform you that Honourable Tamba Kellie was my classmate. He also knows that Honourable Daniel B. Koroma was also my classmate. We were in the same class, and we are all here today. That is why when we debate, you pick sense; we do not just debate because we want to debate; but when we talk, we talk with substance. You would have noticed that most of the time I asked Honourable Daniel B. Koroma's opinion on certain issues. This is because we used to argue a lot on issues that make sense.

Honourable Members, the kind of governance system we are talking about is one you will not see in any textbook because we are limited in the way we look at some issues. When we were in primary or secondary schools, we did government. These are the types of government we are talking about. The Constitution can create a type of government and that is why we need to sit and have a healthy conversation. We want something that will bring us together or something that unite the country as a whole; and we want something that will remove the tension from our politics? That is what we want, Honourable Members. Do you know why the Arab countries are making progress? They were going to be in the same positions as us in Africa; but they noticed very early that for a nation to develop, there must be predictability in governance. If you do not resolve the underlying problems relating to governance and the kind of politics you want to practice, you would not develop. This means instead of paying attention to developments, we put too much energy in politics. When the head of UAE died, within few hours, his successor was crowned. In fact, there was no challenge; nobody went to the media to shout or discuss about it. This is because even before the man died, everybody knew who the successor was going to be. So, when there is predictability, people will pay attention to development; when there is predictability, do we actually need to have two or three elections or a runoff election? We spend huge resources on elections. Sometimes we had 'to go cap in hand,' begging other nations for funds, so that we can conduct our elections. Do we actually need that? We just need one election, probably after every ten [10] years. After the elections, if one party obtained **49%**, the other one has **41%** and the third party has **5%**, everybody knows what should happen.

Honourable Members, we should create our own system that will remove political tension; we put in place a system that will bring us together. We have a huge book we call the National Development Agenda Act, where we indicated all developments. So, when you come to power immediately after the elections in every ten years, you know what to do. This arrangement will not create a situation where somebody will think that the President will rig the elections because he/she knows that he/she has only ten years; and after ten years, you go away. We can even have a national conversation where we can say after a political party has ruled for ten years, it is no longer entitled to the presidency. All of this is part of national conversation we should be thinking about. We have to create something that works for us as a nation. This will enable our governance system to be predictable and we will not beg anybody for our elections. We raise our own resources for our elections, so that nobody controls the outcome of our elections.

Honourable Members, this is very important because if the SLPP, for instance, produces the President for ten years, we know that at the next elections, the SLPP will not produce any President. Therefore, SLPP MPs, the President and the members of that party will be very careful how to treat members of the APC. They know that after ten years, it is APC that will produce the presidency. There will be predictability and everybody will know that when you elect your leader of your political party, he/she would eventually take over from other leader. We have to sit down and have a conversation around this issue. It is too early for people to begin to say, we want to create a one party system. We have people we respect so much and we always listen to them. They are very intelligent and we respect them, but they are the ones creating the confusion; they are the ones fanning the flame of trouble. You would agree with me that when there is problem in any country, nobody can predict the outcome.

Honourable Members, there was a lady who used to work at the Bank of Sierra Leone. I do not know how it happened, but when there was a coup in 1997, she had huge amount of money in her account, but she could not have access to her account because of the way the thing happened. We all know that coup happened on a Sunday. She went to Bonthe and the lady started begging for food. She was moving

from place to place with her children. A whole banker with lot of money, but she had no access to it. I am saying that when there is problem in a nation, nobody can predict the outcome. So, do not even tell me until we fight, because you cannot predict the outcome. Maybe you will be the very first victim. What we should be thinking about is how to bring all of us together and focus our attention on development. This will not allow people from outside to come and exploited us. They are exploiting us through the Agreements they force us to accept; and if you do not accept them, they would support the Opposition against you. Our division is creating an avenue where people exploit us. They called themselves investors and if you do not accept their proposals, then they work behind the scenes to support the Opposition and you would not want that to happen. You accept whatever they bring to us, including terrible Agreements. So, until we resolve our governance system, we will not move forward as a nation. This is my pinch of salt.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Speaker has just reminded us about the two Honourable Members during their days in the university. Mr Speaker, please tell Members that you were my club mate in the University. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. Whenever presidential speeches are delivered in this Chamber, as a responsible political party like the SLPP, what we usually do is to reflect on our continuing political journey. We also use his Speech to reflect on what the people told us with their votes. We also take time to take stock in terms of where we are and what we have to do moving forward in terms of delivering quality services to the people we owe allegiance to. As a responsible political party, we do not pay too much attention to the unwarranted and misguided statements made by our brothers. This is because what I see happening in recent times is that... - *[Interruption]*.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please be guided. You are a very senior MP and they are your colleagues.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: I take note Mr Speaker. What I am seeing happening in this country is that people decide to deliberately misinform the innocent citizens, instead of telling the people the facts. This is one thing that is bothering me so much. As politicians, our ultimate objective is to get the seat of

power, but let us know that we have obligations to tell the people the truth regarding what is happening. This is why I am so furious that we have not been doing the right thing to the people of this country. This is where I want to deviate a bit from the traditional literature theories in terms of informing the people of this country about what our President has done for this nation.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, I refer you to Pages 3 and 4, from Paragraphs 15 to 24 which talk about Agriculture and Food Security as the flagship project. I am sure for the very first time, our government is able to reduce the importation of rice by **30%**. All of us know that the World Food Programme [WFP] usually imports **90%** of the rice we consume in this country, but for the past few years, it has reduced to **60%**, while the **30%** is what we produce locally. The question one would like to ask the Opposition is that did they do what we have done? We have also succeeded local production of onion. For the very first time, our locally produced onions are competing with the imported onions and this has greatly affected the local price of onions. For the women or bachelors [S.O.2 Palampos] who go to the market will agree with me... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I think WFP is working with charity organisations and institutions responsible to import rice.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Mr Speaker, I think this is a deliberate attempt to distract me. This is something we need to give to the people we owe allegiance to. What I am saying here has never happened during the reigns of the Opposition. AS a country, we usually get pledges from investors and international organisations, but what has been happening in the past is that the people were not informed about what those investments did to our country. I am sure about **\$800mln** was pledged to this country, but **\$250mln** was committed. The money was shared among different sectors, such as livestock, cassava production and the development of feeder roads to ensure smooth movement of Agricultural products to the markets. The question is did the Opposition ever do that when they were in power? These are some of the practical examples we should be looking at. I have been hearing that there has never been a debater, except for one or two, who thanked the President

for his effort towards this country. As MPs, we owe that obligation to thank the President whenever he delivers his Speech here.

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the President has done well, but he needs to improve on certain areas. I refer you to Pages 5 and 6, where the President mentioned 'Human Capital Development.' We were condemning Honorable Abdul K. Kamara the other day, but he has been a very good friend on Social Media. Our colleagues have been discrediting the Free Quality Education, which this government has spent so much time and resources to better the lives of our people. As a government, we have constructed 1,500 classrooms. You would agree with me that during the eleven years of APC rule, they only constructed 215 classrooms. You want to tell us that we have not done anything? As a responsible government, we have trained 20,000 teachers just to match up with the current trends. Did the APC do what we have done?

Mr Speaker Honourable Members, the school feeding programme is ongoing in all fifteen districts. All these developments help to make positive things happen in this country. As we speak, children in the Northern part of this country are benefiting a lot. Therefore, it is unacceptable for MPs to totally discredit this scheme. As a government, I know we are not there yet or we have not been able to reach the full potentials in terms of delivery because development is a process. However, let us acknowledge the efforts being made so far. When the past government made some strides, we have been magnanimous to say the truth. This is the first time in the history of this country when local communities are benefiting from electricity due to the relentless efforts of President Maada Bio. All the seven district headquarter towns have been fully electrified and the funds came from locally mobilised revenue. It was by deliberate conduct when the President said that we need to electrify all district headquarter towns, starting from Kabala, Kambia, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun and Bonthe. All of these district headquarter towns have been electrified because the President wants these places to be lit up.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, I hate to interrupt, but what the Honourable Member is saying is not true and the public will judge. I need to be corrected, but as we speak, we do not have electricity and the project has been

abandoned by the contractor. This is not a secret, Mr Speaker. The same for other areas he has mentioned here. He should have said the projects are in progress; but he said Kambia, Kabala, etc. now enjoy electricity. That is not true at all.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please be guided.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. They always have strategies to distract me. My motive here is for us to accept the fact that nothing is perfect. We are still striving, as a country and as a government to make things work. We are still struggling with some of the natural and artificial challenges. There are artificial challenges meant to prevent the President from delivering on his mandate, but we are working very hard to conquer any stumbling blocks. We have to acknowledge what we have done for this country. If you look at the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa [BADEA] Project, it is meant to modernise secondary schools and technical universities, especially government schools. Today, these government schools, including the Magburaka Secondary School, Bo School, Prince of Wales, etc. are currently undergoing rehabilitation. This is something they had the opportunity to do, but they could not do it. Today, President Bio is extending an olive branch to the APC party and we must appreciate him for his goodness. Let us look at the CLSG Project. I would like to state here that continuity is always necessary. President Bio was not the person who actually initiated the CLSG Project; it started in the days of late President Kabbah of blessed memory 1999 and in 2006, it was adopted by ECOWAS heads of states.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in 2013, the project documents came to this House and they were ratified. In 2014, the Loan Agreement was also brought and it was ratified. However, it was disheartening to realise that those documents were kept in the shelves because it started in the days of President Kabbah. They never wanted to celebrate what we started as a political party. So, they kept it on the shelves. It was only when President Bio came in 2018 when he took up this project. Today, they are enjoying the benefits of this project.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, this is a House of rules and a House of records. The Honourable Member is making a direct interpretation by saying that the former government stopped the project. It will be good that he produces evidence to

prove that it was deliberately stopped, or else we kindly ask that he withdraw that statement. As Opposition, sometimes we failed to say certain things not because we are afraid to say them, but because we want to ensure a healthy debate. We have more negative things to say about the government. We must learn not to paint our country black; but if that is the way to go, we will leave you to continue.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Salia-Konneh, please be guided.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Mr Speaker, just before I came in, an Honourable Member on the other side said that our President is bragging. This was an unfortunate statement. The Honourable Member even included us in his statement. I am sure in every democratic state, when once someone is being elected as President, he is the President of that country and not for the political party he belongs. So, if an MP on the other side is referring to the President as your President, it is a recipe for chaos. These are the things we need to understand. I have not named anybody, but I will rephrase my statement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was saying that after the ratification of the Agreement, it was shelved until 2018, when President Bio took up office. As we speak, even areas that were not initially included in this particular project, they are now enjoying the benefits of the CLSG Agreement. So, these are the efforts the President is making, so that we can move forward as a country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us also look at the area of transportation. For the very first time, we now have quality internal transportation system, which is the 50 WAKA FINE. We also have school buses distributed in all district headquarter towns. We are proud of having bus terminals and pedestrian bridges. These are efforts aimed at minimising some of these perennial problems in this country. Our brothers on the other side should accept development, instead of criticising.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, this morning, we talked about the WAKA FINE buses and we commended the government. For the records, this is not the first time we have bus services in Freetown, even the ones given to us by Gaddafi under Pa Kabba were used as urban transportation. We should not try to score political points by eroding the good work of past Presidents who have ruled this country. If

that is the path you want to go, it means we are not doing justice to ourselves. He is painting a picture as if we have never existed until after 2018. This is not fair for our country. We had the Libya buses that were brought here. Those buses were painted green. Have you forgotten about that or were you in Kailahun District?

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Mr Speaker, I see this as a deliberate attempt to distract us.

THE SPEAKER: You have two more minutes, but I will add one minute to take care of the distraction.

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: The distractions are deliberate and notorious. In recent times, I have been on the radio and television, talking about the Proportional Representation. For some reasons, our brothers misunderstand the true intent of the PR System. I was fortunate to read a press statement, which totally condemned the PR System and gives a picture as if the President is trying to impose it on the people of this country. We have to be careful. Just now, you were talking about peace, but most people are agitating for war. Some people want war, but as you rightly said, war has no formula because you never know where it will start; you never know where it will end; and you can never tell the people it will affect. So, for whatever dissatisfaction or disagreement, the word 'war' should not be part of our vocabularies. The idea of saying that the SLPP government is imposing the PR System is unfortunate. It was a proposal made by the President and we know the processes we need to follow. It was never a statement, but a proposal. Let us also look at the power sharing they are talking about. They made a case study of Kenya, but what about the other countries that are practicing power sharing?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us see Sierra Leone as the only country we have. It does not matter how much you have, but any time you leave your country unwarrantedly, you will know that home is sweet. So, even as we progress as a nation, we need to address our differences and this country should be our only country. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Hon. Quintin Salia-Konneh.

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Honourable Jawah Sesay from Koi Village, Sambaya Chiefdom, Tonkolili District. I want to say thank you to the leadership of the Opposition for giving me the opportunity today. When you look at the list, you will notice that it is too long. Mr Speaker, after the 7th August 2025, I took time to read through this Speech delivered here by the President. I found a lot of issues and one of them is the Economy on Page 22, road and bridge infrastructure on Page 15, etc. I am going to take my time to deliver the message from certain districts that I have visited after reading this Speech. I would also look at the theme 'Healthcare: Building Resilient and Inclusive System,' mentioned on Page 8. Lastly, I shall look at Page 17, where the President mentioned 'Public Transportation.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I recently visited five districts; Kono, Bonthe, Moyamba, Koinadugu, etc. I did that because I have decided to be an MP and a freedom fighter for all mining communities. I have been saying this every time I stood up to speak in this Parliament. I always talk about infrastructural development in those mining communities. These are areas where the government generates revenue, but those places are far behind in terms of development.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 196 states: **"Despite global and domestic challenges, Sierra Leone's economy remains resilient. Real GDP grew by 4.0% in 2024, driven by strong performances in mining, agriculture, construction, light manufacturing, and a rebound in services, particularly tourism."** One area that our GDP is highly concentrated is in the mining sector. It is one of our key economic activities in this country. Pages 15 and 16 are talking about infrastructure. If you look at the road from Magburaka to Bendugu, you would find out the road is very bad. This is a road we are supposed to take less than one hour to go to Bendugu. I almost spent something like six hours because of the potholes from Magburaka to Bendugu. Mr Speaker, that place is economically viable for this government. We have the Leone Rock Mining Company in that area and the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Power Station. In Koinadugu District, we have the Cheli Mining Company. In those days, Kolobaya was the headquarters of

Diang Chiefdom and we spent nothing less than 30 minutes; but today, you nearly spend nothing less than three hours on that road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have Bonthe and Moyamba Junction, where we have the Imperi Chiefdom. That is exactly where Rutile is operating. Rutile was founded in 1957. Mr Speaker, I spent almost four hours to go to Imperi Chiefdom. I was not able to reach to the Chiefdom. Had I wanted to go and support my sister, Honourable Fatmata Bockarie, for the construction of the hospital, I would have managed to go there; but because of the bad road, I was not able to go there. I went to Kono, which is one of the worst places. We have many mining companies there. However, there are many things that are lacking. My question is that is it a culture that whenever a community has mineral resources, that community is underdeveloped? This is the pattern I have observed; we have been left out of the development agenda. Well, if you go Page 15 and 16, the President stated in Paragraph 141 that: **"For too long, inadequate roads and bridges have hindered access to essential services, markets and opportunities - slowing economic growth and weakening national cohesion. My Government is tackling this head-on through sustained investments in modern, climate-resilient infrastructure."** In Paragraph 144, the President said: **"with support from the Kuwait fund, we have completed or nearly completed several strategic roads projects..."** It is as if we do not have mining companies in those other operational areas or communities. For each and every mining company in this country, they are paying the following revenue: turnover, PAYE, withholding tax, harbour dues, royalties, export inspection fees, mining licenses, environmental impact assessment licenses, etc. However, when it comes to budget for road infrastructure, the Minister of works does not usually think about those people. I heard the statements made by my learned friend, Hon. Quintin Salia-Konneh from Kailahun. I know Kailahun very well from Kenema to Pendembu to Peje West, I know these areas. In those days, the President usually disbursed cash for feeder roads. When you take that road from Kenema to Bumbuna, trust me you will not spend less than three hours. These are mining operational areas and it is painful to see things like these are happening to our people.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I have decentralised my debate. I am not only going to focus on Tonkolili. I think somebody sent an audio saying the roads in Tonkolili are deplorable. This is because Ernest Bai Koroma, S.O.[2] nor do am. Imagine in the days of Ernest Bai Koroma, he constructed Magburaka Township, Makeni Township, Bonthe Township, Kono Township, Moyamba Township and Pujehun Township, except for Kenema.

HON. MOSES E. EDWIN: Point of Order. Mr Speaker, for records, he never constructed the Bonthe Township Roads.

HON HON. SARTY BANYA: Point of order. For the records, all township roads that were highlighted, though not **100%**, were constructed. I went to supervise a World Bank project under the Youth Ministry in 2016 and at that time, road construction was going on at Mattru Jong.

THE SPEAKER: There is a difference between Mattru Jong and Bonthe town. Were you referring to the district? I am aware that work was done in Mattru Jong, but nothing on the township road of Bonthe Island. I was the MP at that time.

HON. SARTY BANYA: Mr Speaker for the records, we have to be very fair. My colleague and I come from the same district. I am saying we want to see President Bio's successes. I keep calling for constructive dialogue on national issues. All township roads in Moyamba, with the exception of that bridge commonly called Kongosa Bridge that was completed by President Julius Maada Bio, all the feeder roads within the township were done under the leadership of Dr Ernest Bai Koroma

HON. QUINTIN SALIA-KONNEH: Mr Speaker, that is not true. In fact, from Moyamba Junction to Moyamba Township, it was a death trap. I am sure he is aware of it. He is a Member of Parliament from Moyamba District and he has to be very sincere to himself.

THE SPEAKER: Do you want to open that to the debate?

HON. SARTY BANYA: Let me set the records straight. As for Roads designed in this country, it was done since 2003, but the then government... - *[Interruption]*.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: For the records, I want to thank the Honourable Member on the other side, but what he said that is erroneous is the fact that all districts headquarter towns were tarred. I would like to state that Kenema was never tarred.

THE SPEAKER: It is all right, Honourable Members.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, we should not argue about this at all; we are Honourable people. You can tell me you do not appreciate what was done in Kenema, but you cannot tell me Kenema has no tarred roads. In fact, the road leading to Kailahun is the best in Sierra Leone. You cannot even appreciate us for that road. You are leaving Kailahun to talk about Kenema?

HON. JAWAH SESAY: I am advising my colleagues to commend me for what I have done. I want to appreciate two of my colleagues who have been following me to Kono, Kailahun, Port Loko and other places I visited. Mr Lamin Conteh and my driver, Sillah Sesay, were always with me when I was visiting those districts. I was trapped between two villages, where I spent almost six hours. I even recorded a video where I requested the government to consider the Magburaka/Bendugu Road. When some of them saw this video, they started asking me why Ernest Bai Koroma failed to construct it. S.O.[2] 'waetin make Ernest nor be don do am, na now u dae kam with da talk dae. Imagine, since 2018 to date, people are still asking why Ernest Bai Koroma 'nor be don do am.' Well, I also asked, why did you fight for regime change in 2018? You know that the road from Magburaka to Bendugu is very bad and that was in 2018, when Dr Julius Maada Bio was campaigning in Bendugu, he promised that as soon as he won the elections, he would construct that road and calls it Maada Bio Road. S.O.[2], 'e name sake don pwel.' If you travel from a Magburaka to Bendugu, you spend nothing less than six hours.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I want to know if it is a culture that when you have minerals in your place, that place will not develop. I think I have to bring this to the notice of the Ministry of Works and Public Assets. If you want to do a budget or if they want to present their budget, let them consider those areas that generate revenue for the government. Those are areas that the government will generate revenue for national development. How can you construct road in another place forgetting Moyamba or Imperi Chiefdom; construct road in another district,

forgetting Magburaka to Bendugu. The amount of revenue collected from those communities is high. The President said that the GDP grew by **4%**, driven by strong performance in mining. That was the first thing he said. Mr Speaker, since I became MP in 2022, I have been talking for those people. They need to consider them; there is no pay back for having the Bumbuna Hydroelectric. If you take a look at the road from Binkolo Junction to Kalantuba Chiefdom, it is so deplorable.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, I have engaged the Directors General of EGTC, EDSA and the Ministry of Energy, for them to consider our constraints. In fact, they do not listen to us. I heard that they have already presented the 2026 budget to the Minister of Finance and the Bendugu and Binkolo roads are not included. This is so horrible, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Jawah Sesay, You have two more minutes

HON. JAWAH SESAY: Mr Speaker, in Tonkolili District, we have the FG Gold, Leone Rock Mining Company, Bunbuna Hydro and many operational activities taking place in that district, but we have the worse and poorest District Council, forgetting that there is always an amount from the mining company, as clearly stated in the Mines and Mineral Development Act. This is stated in Paragraph 144 of the Speech, Mining District Development Fund. The Minister was so wise enough to create what we call the CD. He also extended it to the Mining District Development Fund. That one is meant for Chiefdoms that do not have the opportunity or that are not part of the mining operational areas. Since we passed that Act in 2023 to date, Tonkolili District has never got their Mining District Development Fund which is supposed to be **20%** of the royalties the mining companies pay to the government. I am asking you now to extend this question to Minister of Finance. What have we been doing with that money?

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, let us look at Page 17, Paragraph 149. I want to commend Road Maintenance Fund because when I became an MP, I signed a project for twenty-two culverts this year, but they only approved nine project culverts. I commend and appreciate them for approving nine culverts. However, if you have twenty-two and only nine were approved, where do you think it will take you to, Mr Speaker? As I said, I commend the Road Maintenance Fund, but I want

to plead to them to approve the remaining converts, so that the road can be connected. It has thirty-three villages. We are talking about twenty-two converts, but only nine were approved. It means we have not done anything.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when I visited those districts, there is a message they gave me and I am going to tell you the message from Kailahun District. **"We want the government to listen to us; we demand a seat at the table, our voice matters in discussing about infrastructure that shape our future, community input is essential for sustainable development."** The Kono people also gave their message. They said equitable distribution of resources is crucial. The wealth generated from our land should be reinvested back in our communities. We deserve infrastructure that meet our basic needs. The Moyamba people also sent their message to the government. **"We urge the government to be accountable for the resources taken from our community. Transparency in how our revenue from the mining sector is crucial for rebuilding trust."** The people of Kailahun District want empowerment: **"Empower our communities by creating job opportunities and skills development programmes. We want to build our future, not just watch it from the sideline."** The people of Tonkolili District need sustainable development, prioritised infrastructural projects that are environmentally sustainable and beneficial to our community, long term health and prosperity. I want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity,

HON. KOMBA QUEE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Leader and Chief Whip of the Opposition want to distract me, but I am not ready to take that. For the records, I am Honourable Komba Quee from Kono District. I also want to extend my appreciation to the President for being transparent and accountable to the people of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will focus my debate on the Economy. I want to draw your attention to Paragraph 198, which talks about inflation. A responsible government is one that feels the pains of its citizens and takes deliberate actions to solve their struggles. In August 2023, the inflation of this country was **54.5%**. However, due to the prudent leadership of the President, Dr Julius Maada Bio and

the implementation of sound monetary and fiscal policies, the inflation rate dropped from **54.5%** to **13.8%**. These are the underlying words, 'prudent monetary and fiscal policies.' This shows that this government is responsible and feels the pains of its citizens. They knew that double digits inflation is not good for a nation, so they fought very hard to bring the inflation to **7.0%**. This is a great job that has been done by the SLPP government. So, we must commend the SLPP government for their hard work. We can attest here that during the past regime, rice importers in this country had monopoly powers.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, you own this House in terms of rules. We implement those rules. I will not take you to the rules in terms of dress code for now, but this debate has been going on that inflation was **55%**. Please let him tell us. When did we reach the point of **54%** of GDP inflation and where are we currently? What year did we get to that point?

THE SPEAKER: No, please proceed Honourable Member.

HON. KOMBA QUEE: I would have responded to that properly.

THE SPEAKER: No, do not respond.

HON. KOMBA QUEE: We knew that importation of rice was monopolised and monopoly in any society is very dangerous because when you have monopoly, you have a single man that is responsible for the importation of a particular commodity. What happened when the demand of that commodity increases? The prices of those commodities will increase. So, what this government did was to bring partners or players to help the CTC that was responsible to import rice into this country. As we speak, we now have eight players in rice importation. With your leave, I may want to list those eight players for the records. 1. VIP group; 2. Gold in trading; 3. Pee Cee and sons; 4. CTC; 5. The two trade solutions; 6. SAFCO, etc. I did my research very well before I came here to talk.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, monopoly also existed in the petroleum industry. We all know that before now, the major importers of petroleum products were Total and NP. The importation of fuel was monopolised by NP and Total. What this government did was to bring other players onboard. We now have the Aminata

Petroleum Company, Zara Fuel Station and many other players responsible for fuel importation. In the past three months, Zara Fuel Station, because of the competition, they thought it wise to be importing their fuel and fixed their own prices. The Government ceiling for fuel was **Le27** per liter, but they decided to sell their fuel at **Le24** or **Le25**. They did not commit any offence because there is a perfect competition in the market; there is no monopoly. This gives power to those fuel stations or the importers. Other importers had a rethink and decided also to reduce their prices. As we speak, customers are buying fuel from Zara more than any other places. The other fuel stations also brought their prices down and the Government allowed that to happen because the government is a very proactive. Upon allowing the market to play for itself, other fuel stations joined to decrease the price of fuel to **Le24** or **Le25**. The Government took the ceiling from **Le27** to **Le24** or **Le25**. Today, we can attest to the fact that a fuel station will be thinking how to help the people by bringing the price of fuel down.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the proactive measures, taken by this party, have yielded positive results. These are remarkable achievements and it clearly shows that the SLPP government is not only responsive, but also progressive. The SLPP government is a progressive government because when they took power in 2018, we saw the transformation in this country; the country is moving in the right direction. We also prioritise the welfare of the people. This is the political party that prioritises the welfare of the citizens of this nation. This is in sharp contrast with the APC because the APC are not in that category; they are not in that class at all.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this brings me to the 2012 Presidential Address delivered by the former President, Dr Ernest Bai Koroma. With your leave, Mr Speaker, Paragraph 16 reads: **"Our economy continues to show positive signs of growth."** Mr Speaker, behind this positive growth, there was different reality. By the time the SLPP took office in 2018, we do not inherit growth; what we inherited was austerity and over **\$1.4bln** debt. This shows how ready the SLPP government is ready to move this country in the right direction. We need to give the SLPP party a chance to transform this nation. As the former Vice President of the APC, Victor Bockarie Foh often said, 'na so so thief thief we bin dae pa.' Those were the words

of the former Vice President. He said; 'bo we na money normor we bin dae eat.' He said this on a radio discussion programme.

HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA: Mr Speaker, for the decency of this House, these are words we can borrow. We can even use derogative words on the President and the Government. We have agreed to maintain the decency of this House. If someone confesses that he is a thief and you still entertain him in your party, it also tells you how the SLPP sees him. I want to kindly ask that for the decency of this House, we focus on making positive contributions. It is not because we are afraid, but because we can do that in a better way and better notations than what he is saying now.

THE SPEAKER: It is alright. Honourable Member, please be guided and be careful of the words you use.

HON. KOMBA QUEE: These are the exact words of the former Vice President.

THE SPEAKER: Please move on and forget about what the former Vice President has said.

HON. KOMBA QUEE: Mr Speaker, I must emphasise here that transparency and accountability are the true pillars of good governance. This Government is transparent and accountable to the people of this nation. This is the first Presidential Address I have seen so far with economic analysis, figures. In the past years, what our people used to tell us about the economy was just literature. There were no figures to inform us better on how our economy is performing. I thank you so much, Mr Speaker for the opportunity. A serious Government is one that reports to its people on the economic measures it has taken. In Paragraph 201, the President clearly demonstrated his ongoing commitments and the people of this nation need to give him chance. I thank you very much.

ADJOURNMENT

*[The House rose at 2:15 p.m., and was adjourned to Wednesday, 16th
October, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.]*