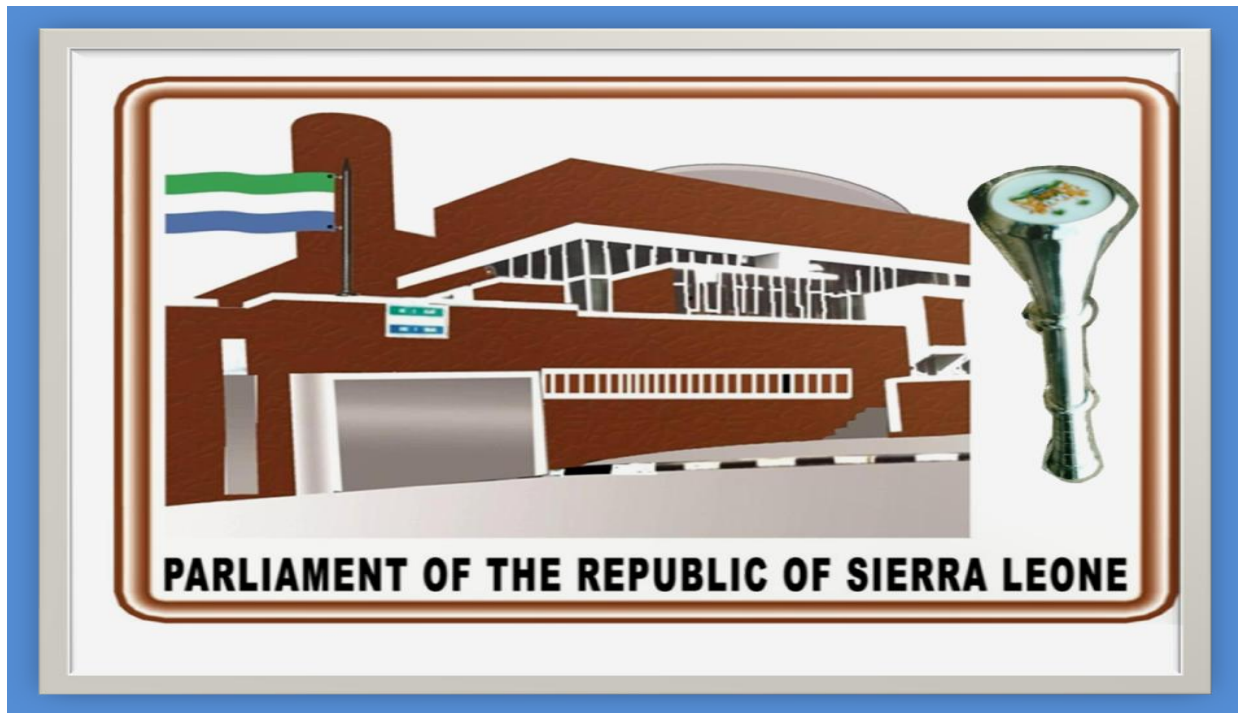


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*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOW*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

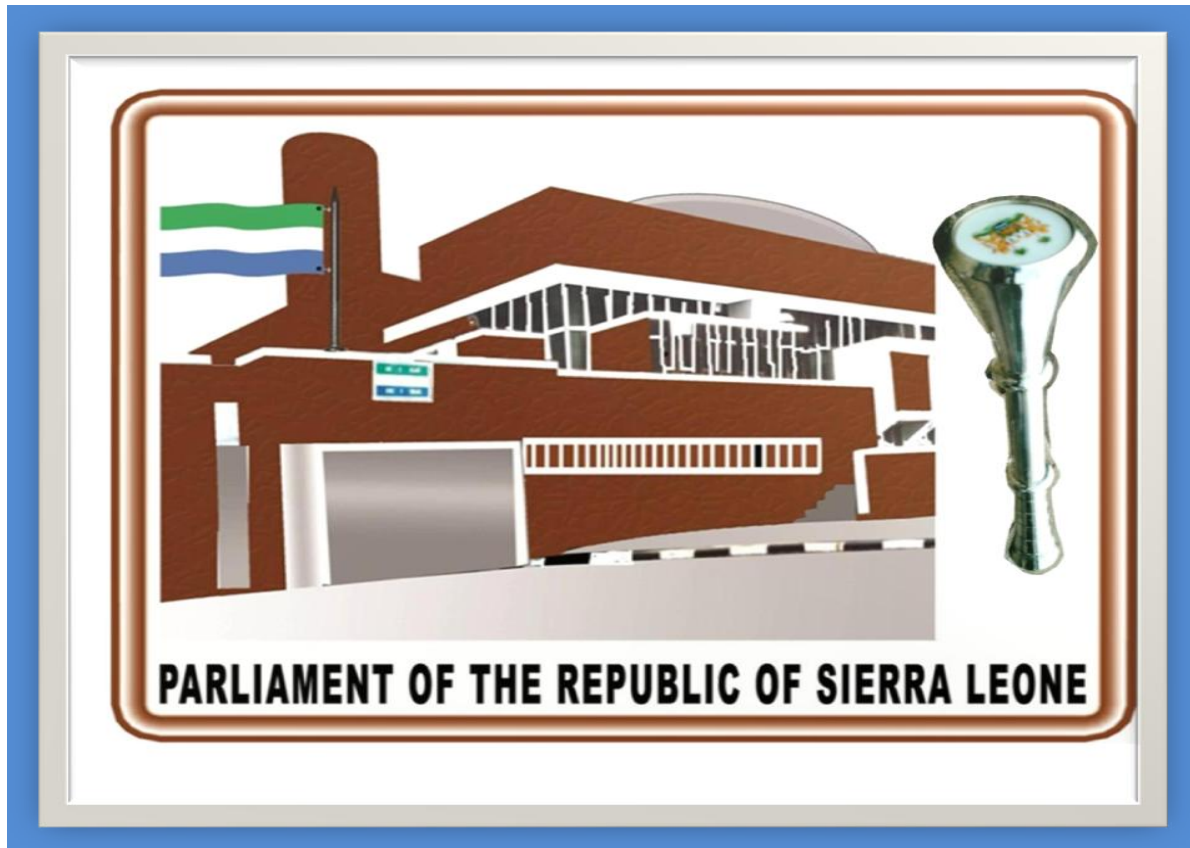
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION –FIRST MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER, 2025.**

*SESSION – 2024/2025*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

# **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**VOLUME: 1**

**NUMBER: 19**

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House  
Held Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2025.

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**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE – FOURTH ALLOTTED DAY**



*THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEON*

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

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

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**Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2025.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

*[The Legislative Clerk, Ms. Isha Koroma, read the Prayers]*

*[The House met at 11:13a.m. in Parliament Building, Tower Hill, Freetown.]*

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

The House was called to Order

*Suspension of **SO 5**[2]*

## **II. RECORD OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER, 2025.**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, Record of Votes and Proceedings for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2025. Pages 1 to 4?, Page 5?, Page 6?, Page 7?, Page 8?, Page 9?, and Page 10. Can a Member please move for its adoption?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Any Seconder?

**HON. IDRIS S. KAMARA:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed to]*

*[Record of Votes and proceedings for Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2025 has been adopted]*

## **III. ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER**

**MR SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, you are all excused *[In Laughter]*; because today, to me, I have never seen a gridlocked traffic like the one I saw today. We have this graduation ceremony at the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, where I live; I think the Clerk and I are neighbours. Where we live became the epicentre of the traffic; it was so terrible, but thank God we are here *[Undertone]* you came and sit at 6:00am? You came very early! I even did not know there was a graduation ceremony today *[Undertone]* yes, for today, you are excused; if you want, come at 12 o'clock *[laughter]*.

**HON. TAMBA KELLIE:** Mr Speaker, you can still read the list; we have new Members in our list today.

**THE SPEAKER:** Oh new Members? Okay, okay. Clerk, you may proceed.

## **IV. BILL**

**THE APPROPRIATION ACT, 2026;**

*BEING AN ACT TO AUTHORISE EXPENDITURE FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND, FOR THE SERVICES OF SIERRA LEONE FOR THE YEAR 2026 AND FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS.*

**SECOND READING - THE MINISTER OF FINANCE— [Sheku Fantamadi Bangura]**

**[Fourth Allotted Day]**

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Leader, proceed.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to invoke **S.O** 63 [iii & iv] to shorten the debate and [64] would allow to three allotted days instead of five before we would allow other items to be discussed.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is it **S.O** [63] or [65]? If it is this one, I have the schedule *[Undertones]*.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** I so move, Mr Speaker

**MR SPEAKER:** Any Secunder?

**HON. MOSES A. EDWIN:** I so second, the Motion

*[Question proposed, put and Agreed to]*

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

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, before we kick-start the debate, I want to state that a repeat of a situation that usually affects this Parliament has popped up again; this has to do with the estimates. If we are about to start the debate, at least the Estimates must be made available for us to be able to deduce the allocations at the Table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, where are the Estimates? Do we have the Financial Secretary [FS] here? Mr Minister, where are the Estimates?

**MR. SHEKU FANTAMADI BANGURA** *[Minister of Finance]:* Mr Speaker, Estimates will be printed and delivered to the Parliament tonight, and they will be available for the

Parliament's consideration. The debate can however continue on the Statements, and the details that are in the Statements and the Appropriation details which are in the Estimates will be printed and circulated tonight whilst the debate continues.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, the Parliamentary Budget Office did a very good job; have you got this? Do you have copies of this? Check your Desktop for this one; the summary of all the issues. Check your Desktops; if you are having difficulties, please call on the IT Officers for help. The title of the document is: 'PBO Analysis'. Check your Desktops; Honourable SOS, are you okay now?

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** No, Mr Speaker, I am not; I am starting the debate today.

**THE SPEAKER:** You should be

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Without the Estimates? I am...

**THE SPEAKER:** This one.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Oh this one?

**MR SPEAKER:** This one is the summary of everything

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Yes, I am fine.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** But I am not fine for the Estimate

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Minister, please ensure in the future that the relevant documents are here.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, these Estimates are very essential

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes we know, we know.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** There is no way you can start this debate when the Estimates are not here, especially for technical people like us who would like to make reference.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, we know, SOS is extremely technical, but please bear with us. Yes, Mr Minister, proceed.

**MR. SHEKU FANTAMADI BANGURA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled: The Appropriation Act 2026, be read the Second Time.

*[Question Proposed]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Both Leaders, approach me *[the two Leaders approached the Speaker]*. Honourable Members, 15 minutes across the board; 15 minutes from today unto finish. Summarise your issues in 15 minutes, with the exception of the Chairman. The Chairman has 20 minutes, all other debaters is 15 minutes. We know what happens in the case of the Leaders.

The Opposition, I have not got your list; I have got the list from the Ruling Party. Let me start by calling the Chairman. The Chairman, you have 20 minutes; after the Chairman, the Opposition. So please give me your list – SOS, do you want to start?

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Yes

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, proceed, Chairman.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to take this singular opportunity to thank the Minister of Finance and his team for the presentation they did to this parliament on the 2026 Budget, with the theme: *'Enhancing Domestic Revenue Mobilisation with a ..., Stability and Improved Service Delivery'*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the Budget, the Minister of Finance was very clear on the economic global outlook today. The economic global outlook in the world today is very challenging, and of course Sierra Leone is part of the globe. So if there are economic situations in the world, Sierra Leone must be affected, and the Minister gave very good summarised details of what is happening globally.

Equally also, in this very Budget, the Minister spoke about the Domestic Macro-Economic Performance. And of course, we should all agree with the Minister and with this government, that there has been stability in the prices of essential goods – like our

staple food; rice, fuel, building materials and other essentials we use for our daily activities.

As for the reduction of inflation, we would agree with the Minister that for the past 20 years, this is the moment we are able to bring inflation to its barest minimum under this Administration, headed by the Minister of Finance, his team and of course His Excellency President Bio. All of that information was shared in the Domestic Macro-Economic Performance.

**Budgetary Performance, 2025:** The exchange rate of the Ministry is stable, GDP projected to grow and of course a stabilised economy.

**Medium-term Economic Outlook:** We are very hopeful that inflation would remain at a single digit and exchange rate continues to be stable. This Budget is generally geared towards service delivery, and that is why the theme is: '**Revenue Mobilisation**'.

We all know that today, even where you expect donor support, there are benchmarks given regarding how much resource we must be able to garner and mobilize. And in the Finance Bill, the Minister rightly told us how much should be collected in Domestic Revenue; and that is a huge chunk of the money, so we do not necessarily have to rely on Donor Support.

Generally, **Service Delivery** is the theme of this Budget, and all of these resources will be anchored on how we provide our services. For example, the President is talking about **Feed Salon**; one of our five Game Changers. Agriculture is very important in that regard. Since Independence, we have not been able to get Agriculture right - government in, government out [*successive governments*]. We have had many projects under different governments, ranging from the *Green Revolution*, and many other projects but we have not been able to get our Agriculture right. And so under this Administration, the **Feed Salon** project is succeeding. We are not there yet, but definitely, a lot of efforts have been made; Government is providing Agricultural inputs like machinery, seedlings, and Government is providing Farmers with access to finances

across the country. And so all of these efforts put together, there have been some dividend. There are Data to support and prove that the importation of rice has dropped drastically, and this is as a result of locally produced rice in the country which people are consuming. So because of this, we have reduced the price of imported rice. Agriculture is not just basically rice, it also includes animal husbandry. The other day we passed over 20 Agreements in this Parliament, all gearing towards Agriculture for the people.

So, Government is very much determined to ensure that we get our Agriculture right by providing everything so that we would see the dividend. Even the infrastructural development can gear towards Agriculture; we have seen the government doing Trunk Roads. The other day we passed an Agreement on the Kambia-Tomparie Road. Once that road is opened, of course, it will lead to a multiplier effect, thereby linking other major roads to bring in agricultural products to the markets. And of course, a lot of other markets would sprout along the corridor road. This government promised to also build major bridges that will equally help agricultural productivity. I think it was last weekend that the president opened the Gendema Bridge. Ferries have been sinking in that particular River since Independence.

Equally also, the President opened the Mattru-Jong Bridge, and the Manowa Bridge is about to be completed. And that too will equally lead to the expansion of that area, and of course, increase in agricultural productivity. So all of these are geared towards improving agriculture, and the required resources have been given to farmers to ensure that we get it right this time; we get the infrastructure, we get everything randomly. So in Agriculture, government is spending huge sums of money and I am pretty sure with the right set of people, we will get Agriculture right.

**Human Capital Development:** Of course Human Capital Development has also been our flagship project to support Human development through the Free Quality Education; provision of teaching and learning materials, School Fees, and of course, school feeding activities. Government would continue with that, and the number of

educated people will increase, thereby providing the strongest resource base that every nation desires to grow.

### **Higher Education:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, support to Higher Education is equally part of the Human Capital Development. The Government has supported Universities across the country; the Kono University, The Eastern Technical University in Kenema etc. At some point, the Eastern Region was the only Region without University. President Bio promised during his campaign period that when he became President he would definitely give the Eastern Region a University. And due to his words, the Eastern Region now has the Eastern Technical University which has brought education to our door step; our children in the Eastern Region would no more overstretch themselves to access Universities in other regions, except otherwise the person wants to offer a course that is not offered in that Region. Other infrastructural development is happening across the board, and we are very grateful to H E the President for all of the infrastructural development he has done for us.

### **Health:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we know that the health situation in this country has been all along challenging, and the advent of Ebola exacerbated and exposed the nature of our health system back then. But a lot of efforts have been made by this government to improve our health infrastructure- Primary healthcare, Secondary healthcare, Tertiary healthcare, and of course, health infrastructure across the board; a couple of hospitals have either been completed, or are under construction by HE the President. There is a very huge infrastructure being constructed at the 34 Military Hospital, our regional referral hospitals are being refurbished and maintained, and the required resources have been given to all of these institutions to ensure that we get our health system right. Infant and Maternal Mortality rates have dropped drastically, and we have been reliably informed by Data that even the life expectancy of Sierra Leoneans has improved. All of these is as a result of efforts made by this government to ensure that we improve on our healthcare system. Government has employed health

workers and will continue to employ health workers even in the current budget, to ensure that we provide such at all levels.

### **Social Protection:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Government is allocating **22.8Mln** of this Budget to the Ministry of Social Welfare to create Rehabilitation Centres across the country. We know we are faced with a very serious challenge regarding the intake of drugs, particularly Kush. Our children, mostly young people have been addicted to Kush, and government has thought it fit to establish rehabilitation centres across the country to help address the menace. Kush victims are to be taken to those Rehabilitation Centres counselling and healing, and then later reintegrated to the communities. Of course the Ministry of Employment and Labour, and that of Social Security are equally doing their best in the area of Social Protection. The Ministry of Gender and Children's Affairs and the National Commission for Social Action [NaCSA] are also anchoring and supporting all of those Institutions to ensure that they provide Social Protection for our citizens.

### **Roads and Bridges:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I believe this government has built more roads than any other governments in this country *[Interruptions]*; I could remember vividly that during the previous administration, they used to build township roads but the township roads were not equitably distributed across the country. My city for example, Kenema, suffered greatly; the roads were impassable. We did all what we could at that time to ensure that at least the main roads in Kenema, for instance, Blama and Hanga Roads were paved but we were disappointed; those roads were never paved. A very senior official of the former government at that time said **S.O** [2], '*you fodom for me, ar fodom for you*'. Meaning, because Kenema was the strongest hold of the Opposition SLPP, there was no way they were going to do our roads. But when His Excellency President Bio went to Kenema during the campaign periods, he saw the roads and we appealed to him about those roads and he promised us to do those roads. Of course, when he assumed power, the township roads across the country, including Kenema, Makeni, Bo and other towns are on-going *[Interruptions]*.

In Kenema today, major roads are being tarred, and this is the first time since I was a boy that I have seen major tarmacked roads in Kenema; it only happens under this administration. We are therefore grateful to HE, and we want to encourage him to continue to provide services for the people across the country, irrespective of which region they find themselves.

Mr Minister, please continue to provide the resources for us to continue to provide services across the country for Sierra Leoneans [*Undertones*]. I am pretty sure that roads have been done in Makeni. The Hospital Road they are talking about was in bad shape during the former government even when they were doing township roads. I really do not know why that particular road was left out. However, I am pretty sure that since that road was not done under the previous administration, it has to be done this time because we believe that road is a very important road leading to the Makeni Government Hospital; it should not be neglected.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, government is doing trunk roads across the country. Agreements gearing the construction of roads have been approved in this Chamber. For example, the Kambia/Tomparie road is a major trunk road that was approved here, and even my colleagues on the other side acknowledged the government for that particular Agreement [*undertone*] yes, it was brought to Parliament before now but it was not properly done; it was abandoned and there were lots of criticisms. So now that it has now come to Parliament and ratified [*Interruption*], and the mobilization process for the speedy commencement of that work is on-going, we are very grateful for that. The Mano Junction/Tongo Road also has been ratified in this Parliament, and we are very grateful for that also because that road is a very serious road that links Kono. Even though Kono is one of the three Ks in Eastern Region, the nature of that road has always made it difficult for Kono to be linked with the other two Districts [Kailahun and Kenema] We believe when eventually that road is completed, the synergy between the people of Kenema and Kono will be clearly seen because we belong to the same region.

And of course, the Kenema/Zimmi road is also a very serious road. Before the war, that was the road that people used to travel to Liberia because that road is shorter. We have

cried to government, and the government has given the assurance to work on that road. We know for sure that construction of roads is a capital intensive project but the government has definitely promised to do something about that road.

And Mr Minister, even if that road is to be made a toll road, we would appreciate it because we definitely need that road. It is a major trunk road and if it completed, there are about seven Chiefdoms behind the Moa River commonly called 'Moa-oma' that can benefit from that road. Of course, the President has promised, and we know that when he promises, he will definitely deliver; so we are very confident about that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, other roads have been mentioned in the Budget, and we are pretty sure that within the next one year all of those roads would have been accounted for. A team of SALWACO is now working with other Institutions involved to formulate plans to ensure that our water catchments are protected from being damaged so that we will continue to provide water. Our children continue to go and fetch water by using jerry cans and five gallon rubbers, which is very dangerous for them; in the process anything can happen, and they will not be protected. So we are working to ensure that those catchments are protected. SALWACO is in charge of water across the country, and I am sure that the Three-Town Water Project for Bo, Kenema and Makeni has been completed and we are benefiting from that. Monies have been allocated for the Seven Districts Water Project, and we are pretty sure that too will be completed soon, and we would have water across the country.

### **Employment, Youth and Sport:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, **NLe49.7Mln** has been allocated in this budget for Employment, Youth and Sports...

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Kaisamba, you have one minute more

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Mr Speaker, I am trying to summarize but please, permit me few more minutes as the opener of the debate, Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Like how many minutes, two?

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Five minutes.

**MR SPEAKER:** Okay, proceed; strictly five minutes.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for employment, government promised that employment will be provided right across the country, and a lot of Jobs have been created across the country. Other jobs are about to be created because Institutions are coming, and once those ones open up, they would provide jobs for the people, and we are looking forward to that.

**Youth Employment:**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the area of Youth Employment, the youths have been doing very well; youths in Agriculture, and many other things are happening in other areas. The Ministry of Youths is doing a very good job; Youth Centres and Carwash Centres have been opened, and people are using those areas, except for very few Districts that have abandoned their Youths Carwash Centres. We therefore want to encourage them that these are very important centres created by the government, and that they should use those places judiciously; not for smoking Kush or engaging in other harmful activities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in the history of this country, this government has been the biggest supporter of sport activities, particularly football. Government has spent, and is continuing to spend a lot of money on International matches and the Premiership in this country. We equally want to encourage the SLFA to ensure that once government is spending all of these monies, we get the required results which would encourage the government to spend more.

**Trade:**

On the area of Trade, Government is providing **NLe29.6Min** to Trade and Industry. The Ministry of Trade and Industry is doing a very fine job; they have been able to stabilize the pricing formula for both Cement and Iron Rods, and of course Rice which is our staple food. The Industry has been doing a fantastic job; we have more

Manufacturing Industries now in Sierra Leone, and we want to thank the Ministry of Trade and Industry for all they are doing.

Generally, there will be some risks in the implementation of the 2026 Budget; which has to do with revenue mobilization. The theme of this Budget is '*Domestic Revenue Mobilization*', and government is putting premium on that. All of these are just budget proposals; we have to generate the required funds to be able to disburse the allocations to the Institutions for them to undertake all of these activities. There will be a serious issue with the Budget if we are not able to mobilize the required resources. We therefore want to ask NRA to realise that they now have the Finance Act to implement. We have been assured that the things that we have in the Finance Act would not adversely affect any Sierra Leonean in this country; and within the next one year we will be seen to achieve just that. So we want to ask the NRA to ensure that they fiercely collect the required domestic revenue so that we can be able to fund this budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members overall, the trade uncertainties around the world could equally be another challenge. There are a lot of trade wars between powerful countries in the world - United States, China, and of course other countries. So if those wars continue, they will stake negative things on us. We hope that those trade wars will stop and we would do trade liberally.

Of course, the Supply Chain will be disrupted if conflicts continue. There are lots of conflicts in the world now, and once those conflicts continue, the supply chain will equally be disrupted. We are very hopeful that efforts are being made by big powers in the world to resolve some of these conflicts; for example, Ukraine, Russia and other countries in the world. So failure to mobilize the required domestic revenue will be a very serious challenge, and as leaders in this Parliament, I think we should support the NRA to ensure that those revenues are collected.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, overall, this Budget is a very fine budget for 2026. People may have their own interpretation of the budget, but I believe it is a good budget, and it will definitely help to improve the lives of Sierra Leoneans for the year under review - 2026.

On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to say thank you so much, and I want to encourage Members to have fruitful deliberations so that at the end of the day we would pass the 2026 Budget with one voice, thank you so much, Sir.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Chairman of Finance. Honourable Salieu Osman Sesay [SOS], you have the Floor; 15 minutes.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me join the Chairman of Finance to thank the Minister and team for putting this very important document together. Mr Speaker, before I go to the debate proper, for the records, let it be clear that since the beginning of this government, there has never been a road construction in Makeni and the entire Bombali District *[Interruptions]*, especially Makeni City. The most important road leading to the North Regional Referral Hospital is still in bad shape. The people of Bombali have made several appeals to the President and the Minister of Finance for the construction of that road but all those efforts went in vain.

Mr Chairman Finance Committee, please take your time to go to Makeni and see that road; it is even worse than it was.

Secondly Mr Speaker, the global or exogenous factors affecting the Budget should not be an excuse to prevent us as a nation to develop our economy. Sierra Leone is not in isolation; we have more vulnerable economies that are making it through.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Point of Order, Mr Speaker

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. FRANCIS A. KAISAMBA:** Mr Speaker, I find it strange for my colleague from Bombali to say that since the inception of this government there has been no road construction in the whole of the Northern Region; I am sure that is definitely not true.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, hold on. Mr Minister, take note to respond to the issues. I will urge...

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, it is not only the North-East Region...

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on. Honourable Members, with all due respect to both sides, please, that is why we have the Minister of Finance here. I would respectfully urge you to exercise patience; no matter what you say, I trust the Minister of Finance. Take note of all the issues, Mr Minister and respond appropriately when the day comes. At least, this is for the edification of the populace; so that they will know exactly whether somebody is saying the fact or not. So take note, please. Yes.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I hope you take note of my time as well.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes of course, do not get worried.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, it is not only the North-East Region; even the North-West Region is affected, I want to challenge you, Honourable Member.

I was talking about the global shocks before I got interrupted. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our economy should be strong enough, our Minister should put in place better and prudent policies to ensure that we have the right absorbers to fight whatever external shock that comes into the economy. When we had a fall in Iron-Ore that was the time we increased salaries. We had an increase because our economy was one of the fastest growing economies.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on, Honourable SOS. Mr Clerk, take note of all the MDAs that are here and those that are not here, please. Proceed.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** So Mr Speaker, this government should stop being a crying Baby, it should grow up now; we are seven years in this. Let us deliver now and stop blaming external shocks.

*Suspension of S.O 5 [2]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Proceed

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, as I was saying, I do not envy the job of the Minister because I know sometimes he has sleepless nights to put the economy in place. Even with the best policies, there are always challenges, especially when it comes to balancing the situation between the welfare of the people and the IMF. There

are times the Minister may have very good policies that would help to improve the economy and the living standards, but because his hands are tied to ensure that he fulfil the benchmarks of the IMF, he has no option but to follow the trend of the IMF otherwise, there will be no budgetary support. And we know our revenue is very low, and the theme as stated by my colleague is: '*Domestic Revenue Mobilization*'. And that is where my theme will be generated from very soon; just pay attention.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the picture painted in this budget is so rosy, but that is not the case; we are talking about stable exchange rates, low level of inflation, low lending rates, single digit Inflation since 20 years- beautiful! Mr Speaker, the Minister of Finance and the Bank of Sierra Leone have succeeded in manipulating all those variables. When I talk of manipulation in this context I do not mean **false figures**, I simply meant '**using prudence or whatever means to control those variables**' *[interruption]* I am on my legs, Mr Speaker. You can manipulate the variables; the interest rate, the inflation rate, and the exchange rate by making it appear stable. But there is one variable that is exposing the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Sierra Leone; which is the '*Foreign Reserve*'. It is **1.7** Import Cover accredit to the Budget. Do you know what that means? It means we can only buy imported goods within one month, and not beyond, not even three months; so anything can happen. It implies secretly that the Bank of Sierra Leone is practicing '**manage float exchange rates**'; that means pumping money secretly into the economy, and that is why the reserve is depleting, and that is very worrisome because our reserve is dangerously low. Anything can happen, and when that happens, the exchange rate will expose you; it will jump maybe, from 2024 to 2035. It happened few months ago, and they had to inject more foreign exchange into the economy for the exchange rate to be stabilized. That was why the IMF technically suspended the budget support for a while due to the low foreign reserve.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you can manipulate the exchange rate, you can manipulate the inflationary rates, but the foreign reserve will expose you. We celebrated the **4.6** inflationary rate by saying that '*it is good, and that for 20 years, this*

*is the first time of having a single digit of 4.6'. In 2023, our inflation went up to 56%; you would say that is good because we now have 4.6. It means that the 56% plus the 4% gives you almost 60.4% of the current cost of living. So do not celebrate that [Undertones] for you to know, go to the market; even ordinary cup of pepper is Le 5,000.*

And Mr Minister, with all of these gains you have made, the current Finance Act will erode those gains by the time you increase Fuel, Tomato, Cement, and all those domestic stuffs, the inflation will just come and eat all those things you are now talking about; it is the fact *[undertones]*. I am not wishing that, but the variables are clear; if you impose Tax, the cost of production will increase, and if it increases, what will happen? The Producer will pass on the Tax burden to the final consumer, and that will affect our inflationary rate. So I am expecting by 2026 that our inflationary rate will go maybe to 25 or 30% because of its current increase.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Chairman Finance, please allow him to debate. Honourable SOS, you have one more minute *[Undertones]*.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, I am starting the debate on this side, so I should be given the same favour as you did for the Chairman, Sir *[Interruptions]*...

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on. You have one more minute, but I will add two more minutes to make it three, so proceed. Please, do not distract him.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, because of time *[Interruptions]*, this government has reduced the NRA to a level our people may refer to as '*gbo-lan gbo-lan*'. This is a '*gbolan gbolan*' Budget, **S.O 2**; '*tek small yanda, tek small yanda en put together*'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I really have so much to say but I will leave that for the other Members. As I roundup Mr Speaker, Government is saying they have reduced the borrowing rate; the domestic lending. Because they are not borrowing, Service Delivery is not achieved because of low revenue mobilization. Government has little resources to provide allocation to MDAs. If you ask them when last they received their

allocation, they will tell you maybe, since the beginning of this year, and some will tell you they received their allocation only one time. So we are stifling service delivery because we want to maintain the IMF conditionality, or give a picture that we are no longer borrowing from the Commercial Banks.

But Mr Minister, let me warn you that it is highly likely that the revenue we are targeting for 2026 will not be materialized. And if we cannot raise that revenue, funding gap will exist, and when it exists, Government will now run to the Commercial Banks as usual to borrow more money with interest; that will surely have a negative impact to the economy.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what I was expecting from the Minister was that instead of embarking on too much revenue mobilization, thereby putting too much pressure on our ordinary people, we should have introduced a cut down in our wage bills, especially on Embassies. Mr Speaker, we have so many Embassies in the world than we actually require. We can combine some countries and bring them under one Embassy instead of letting every country having its own Embassy; that is how a poor country should manage expenditure.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our problem is not only low Revenue collection, but also how to manage the limited resources we are getting; our management is poor. So, because we are poor in managing our resources, that is why we keep 'gbolang gbolaing', **S.O 2** [*undertone*] Go and ask Emerson, the famous musician to tell you about Gobnal Gbolan.

Mr Speaker, let me wrap off by talking a bit about Agriculture, since I am the Chairman for Agriculture. On that note, Mr Speaker, I want to commend the government so far for the support or attention it has given to Agriculture. It is no doubt that successive governments have made frantic efforts to ensure that we feed ourselves. The ABDP and the FSRP which are the main pillars of the '**Feed Salon**' project are doing very well in ensuring that service delivery is achieved.

But Mr Speaker, let me end up by making a plea to the Minister: Mr Minister, you can delay allocations for other Ministries, but let it not be for the Ministry of Agriculture because its activities are time bound. When you delay allocation for Agriculture, you have already undermined the success of the food security drive. So on that note, I want to urge Mr Minister, going forward, to prioritize the flagship project of our President by making timely and adequate allocations to Agriculture. Counterpart funding should be available because in the event that there are delays from the Donor Funds, the counterpart funding would be there to ensure that the Ministry and other Agencies execute timely activities of Agriculture. With those few words, I want to thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you Honourable Salieu Osman Sesay. Honourable Joseph Williams-Lamin, you have the Floor

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Thank you very much Honourable Speaker. Mr Speaker, Colleague Members of Parliament, I want to join the Chairman of Finance to express my profound thanks and appreciation to the Number One gentleman of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency, the President retired but not tired, Julius Maada Bio and his team.

Mr Speaker, Colleague Members of Parliament, ingratitude is not a surprise to us in Sierra Leone, but when some people fail to express gratitude, it becomes a matter of concern. I expect my colleague who studied in England to be very grateful for this Finance Document. It is only in England that you can step on someone's foot and the person you stepped on would be the one to say '*I am sorry*'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the Honourable Member to state that there is no road construction work in the entire Northern Region by this government, is not true. I and the very gentleman making this claim are Members of the Works Committee; we went to Kabala recently to inspect the on-going roads construction in Sinkonia, Koinadugu District which the Honourable Member is aware of.

For the Honourable Member to make a blanket statement that no construction work is on-going in the Northern Region is not true; and I have a very strong connection with the North –Tonkolili District, Bombali District, Koinadugu District, and so on. I have driven from that part of the country from Koinadugu to Sinkonia, and the road is under construction, and a massive one for that matter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I was saying, gratitude is very important, and our devoted Minister expressed that in Page **43** Paragraph **200**. Time will not permit me to read it now but you can check it up. The Minister in the document expressed maximum gratitude to our international partners, which will encourage them to continue to provide the needed support to enhance our economy. So we strongly believe that our economy will be stronger as we go along.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before I conclude, I would want to convey a message that service delivery is the bridge of this budget between the policy and the people. That is why Institutions that are given monies are doing their best to ensure that they mitigate some of the issues in the area of scale-up nutrition. If you go to Njala University for example, we have what is called '*food technology and consumer studies*'. If you go to Milton Margai Technical University, we have what is called '*home science and Institutional Sciences*'. We are not only talking about food, but we are giving them quality. Our young people coming from these Universities are helping our society to be eating micro- nutrients. What I simply mean is carbohydrate, protein and fat. These are not the only food contents that we eat, but they are teaching us to also think about the micro-nutrients [*the minerals, the vitamins and water*] which we use to mitigate some of the health challenges like diabetes, heart failure, high blood pressure, kidney, obesity, malnutrition etc.

Mr Minister, I therefore implore you to provide more support to especially the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education so that these Universities will meet their targets and be able to do what is expected of them. Student Loan Scheme has been provided for some of our people who are having difficulties in meeting their academic charges; over 400 students have received loans from these Institutions, and in this budget also, you

have allocated **NLe9.5Mln** to the Scheme so that more people will be enhance to acquire quality education in that direction.

Mr Speaker, Colleague Members of Parliament, I tried to do some comparative analysis to know where we stand as a country in the sub-region. With a population of **8.4 million** in 2023, you presented **\$1.23Bln**, which is **Le27.17Bln** for 2026. Liberia with a population of **5.8 million people** has its own budget, and the Gambia has a budget of **36Bln** Dalasi. Ghana of course has a population four times greater than us. But what I would assure this House and the general public is that, our economy is far better than most of these countries that I have named, with the exception of Ghana. Therefore we can safely say that we are in the right trajectory, and I ask that Mr Minister, you pursue your task.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to draw your attention to Page **30**, Paragraph **297** of the State Opening Address of His Excellency, where he acknowledged the fact that people are grumbling about his travelling abroad. It is so important that the president has to travel abroad. If for example you inherit serious challenges as a head of a family, you are not going to complain; you will have to institute other measures that would enhance the economy. That is exactly what the president is doing. The president cannot sit in his comfort zone in Sierra Leone and expect to get all the external supports he has been able to attract. I felt good when I saw my colleague Honourable Members in the General Assembly on the 24<sup>th</sup> of September this year because they have exposed themselves to the International stage. Another thing I felt good about in that same month was when an Honourable Member from Bombali clarified the issue of the Tripartite to the public. I also felt good in the month of September when a village that was deprived of quality education for one hundred and four years was provided with a four class room building, and as I speak, we have over forty-eight pupils who are now benefiting from quality education. So these people are getting direct benefit from the nation's coffers. So that is something we need to applaud the government for.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it was said that the Parliament of Sierra Leone has too many Consultants- somebody said the Sierra Leone Parliament has 25 Consultants which is not true; we only have seven Consultants.

**HON. AARON A. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, I stand on **S.O** [36]. Mr Speaker, it is about time that when we debate, we stick to the rules. Most of the issues the Honourable Member is now saying are issues that are totally outside the content of the Speech we are debating.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Mr Speaker, with all due respect to the senior Member, I am not speaking out of content.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Aaron Koroma, I do not know why you want to take my role away from me

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Honourable Member, Parliament is part of this Budget, so therefore, if something is talking against this Parliament we have all the right to defend this House. It is important that we state the right thing about the Parliament of Sierra Leone, so that the general public will have confidence in this House.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, talking about the number of people that represented this Parliament to the United Nations, I want it to be known that it was only four people out of **376** Staff members. For me, I see it that as Africans, we also contributed very hard to build United States of America. That is why when I travelled to Europe or other parts of the jurisdiction, I regard it as a payback period for us. So I believe that we even have the right to go with more Sierra Leoneans out there because we have contributed to that economy. So I am sure we are doing the right thing in this Parliament. Out of the **376** Staff Workers here, we have **58%** male and **42%** female; which means that Parliament has already exceeded the **30%** quota that the women are asking for. So this Parliament is doing the right thing, and therefore Mr Minister deserves to endorse the Budget of this Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Sorry Honourable Williams Lamin, your time is up, but I would give you one minute.

**HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN:** Thank you very much, Sir. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we look at this Budget which is **Le27.7Bln**, you would realise that we have gone up to **Le20.8Bln** in the last eight years. I think it is a job well done by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Speaker, Colleague Members of Parliament, on that note, I have a document here which I wanted to talk about regarding the Technical and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Social Welfare If time would have permitted me.

Mr Speaker, with your leave, I want to kindly hand this very important commitment document to Mr Minister for his attention, thank you very much, Sir.

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

**HON. AARON A. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know we are constrained with time, but on a very important note, I want to observe that Section **10** of the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation Act mandates the SLBC to cover debates of such nature live. But as we speak, SLBC is not here to cover this particular proceeding. I am not sure they have given any reason as to why they have not covered such a very important proceeding of Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, please follow that up against tomorrow. Okay, the Clerk will follow that up; thank you very much. Honourable Rugiatu Kamara, you now have the Floor.

**HON. RUGIATU KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Colleague Members of Parliament, I want to start my debate by asking the Minister of Finance whether Tonkolili District has offended this government in any way. Tonkolili District can be considered as the breadbasket of this country due to its contribution to our revenue. Even though Tonkolili shares border with more Districts than any other District in this country, yet we are not benefitting from good roads and some other major facilities. For the past seven years the three major roads in Tonkolili District have not been in the budget:

Magburaka/Mile 91, Yele/Bo and Magburaka/Bumbuna road. So I want to ask the Minister why we are not benefitting from the budget, including appointments to key positions in the country. Mr Minister, I therefore in that regard want you to take these messages or concerns to the President.

Mr Minister, the budget is named every year as the '**Peoples Budget**', but year in year out we receive complaints from MDAs during Committee on Supply sessions that they hardly receive their required allocations on time. The evidence is clear, that is why, **S.O [2]**, '*di country tranga*'.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me touch on the issue of the Local Councils: As far as I am concerned, there is presently nothing to write home about the Local Councils. I would like to ask the Minister again whether he is aware of the objective of the re-introduction of the Local Councils. Some of the reasons why the Local Councils were established include:

To bring governance closer to the localities, develop the economy within the localities, and to improve on service delivery. But Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how can the Councils achieve these mandates when they are not receiving their required allocations? For the past two years, Councils are only receiving between **30** to **33%** of their allocations [*Interruption*].

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, I do not like when our ladies debate and you disturb them. Reserve undertones for your male counterparts; when ladies debate, there must be decorum. We all know that this Parliament is trying at all cost to ensure that our women in this country are protected; we have thousands of women that would not venture to come into politics because of the way we treat them. So please, let us give our women confidence that when they are involved in politics, they will be protected. So please, allow her, and do not forget that we are online. So Honourable Rugiatsu, you have all the time.

**HON. RUGIATU KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, like I said, for the past two years Councils are only receiving **30** to **33%** of

their allocations, and for this year, 2025, Councils have not received their allocations; not a single cent has been disbursed to them. How can the Councils deliver on their mandates with this trend, Mr Speaker? MPs are the ones that are now forced to undertake some of the functions of these Councils. **S.O** [2], *'na we di MPs dem now don tot di burden for development'* [Applause]. Members of Parliament are now judged in their Constituencies based on the development activities they are engaged in because the Councils are not doing much. So Mr Minister, this is very important, and I would like to say that the decentralization process has deteriorated under this Administration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what is happening now in this country is disheartening; it seems like this government has left the development of this country to donor funded projects. When last did we hear or see programmes that are fully funded by government? These are just the core sectors; all we hear about are just project, project and project. All the bridges and the supports provided to farmers that they are talking about are Donor Funded Projects. We are not doing much, even the counterpart contributions that the government is supposed to provide are not provided on time. And that is more the reason why most of these projects are delayed. With all the lapses from the government in terms of their counterpart contributions, Government Officials are the ones we always see in front of Cameras, posting and doing propaganda on the projects.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to inform the Minister that last year, 2024, we went to Kenema to launch the South/South Cooperation Project; a Vietnamese project under FAO. According to the Project, Rokuprr is supposed to develop the seeds whilst Lambayama in Kenema and Makali in Tonkolili are supposed to multiply the foundation seeds. Even before the launch of the project, FAO had contributed their own funds, but the project is stalled because government is yet to provide its own counterpart funding. And for this year, 2025, we saw the worst harvest in Makali. So please Mr Minister, I want you to look at that South/South Cooperation Project under FAO with the Vietnamese.

Mr Minister, under Agriculture, if you look at the budget, you would notice that **60%** is the commitment allocated for Agriculture under the Maputo contribution. I want to tell you that is just for the international stage; the reality is that I doubt whether the Ministry of Agriculture is even receiving up to **2%** of this allocation. Mr Minister, I do not know whether you are aware that the District Agriculture Officers [DAOs] do not have official vehicles? These DAOs are not in the Districts just to sit idly at their offices; they are the frontline extension workers, and they are supposed to be visiting the farmers in their farms, and give them technical advice, especially when we are faced with the issue of climate change. For this 2025, the harvest is extremely poor because of the climate change issue. We had series of rains around August which greatly affected the yields of the boli-land.

Also, the Block Extension Officers [BEO] are supposed to be going to the farmers but they cannot go because some of them do not have motor bikes, and their allocation is tied to the Councils. The fact that Councils are not receiving their required budget on time indicates that all the MDAs under the Councils are not operating accordingly. Mr Minister, I therefore want to encourage you to do some site visits to those Councils that are not receiving allocations and see whether they are actually operating as normal Councils [*Undertones*] no, I will continue to talk to the Minister because his position is very much important. Like I said, Mr Minister, if you look at allocations in this budget and the reality on the ground, you would realize that Agriculture, the Flagship programme of the government is receiving very little. And if we are saying that Agriculture is the Flagship programme, it must be reflected on its allocation, **S.O** [2], '*di tem wae u papa na chief, na di tem u dae werr gown.*'

Mr Speaker, I am therefore appealing that you invite the farmers to hear from them regarding the successes and challenges of Agriculture in the country. For us Member of Parliament who are on Watt Sapp forums, just throw a simple question on the status of Agriculture in your groups for farmers to respond and see how they would react to you. Trust me, if you are not careful you would delete yourself from that group due to the negative responses and attacks you would receive [*Laughter*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I must also confirm that there are good things happening in the sector which we very much appreciate, however, we have more issues to deal with than the ones we have addressed. These projects are indeed providing some form of support to farmers but those supports are not enough because the agencies providing those supports are also operating on limited budgets. They may promise to support, for example, **500** or **2000** farmers, but if government does not put aside monies for the Ministry of Agriculture to support the farmers, it can be very challenging for the farmers.

Mr Minister, we have seen real agricultural transformation in countries like Nigeria and Ghana; we have seen government put aside monies purely for Agriculture. Our government also needs to be putting monies aside to invest in Agriculture. The money that the Bank of Sierra Leone said to have put aside for Agricultural purposes is very difficult to access by the farmers. It is only recently that we have started seeing Private Sector Farmers; let us not forget the Small Holder Farmers who are in majority but cannot afford to come to Freetown, talk less of applying for loans under this programme. So for me, I just want to say that the President was not forced to make Agriculture his Flagship programme; he chooses to do this and, please, we only have two years, and we cannot tell which programme the next government will have as its flagship. So please, let us stop the propaganda, and let us stop the manipulation of Data. We all saw in the recent the WFP Report that **82%** of our population is starving. So, let us focus on the people to ensure that they all benefit from the facilities of this country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Rugiatu Kamara. Is Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara here? Okay, then we move to Honourable Charles Abdulai.

**HON. CHARLES ABDULAI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I take the queue from the previous speakers to have a bite on this Budget and Estimate Statement with the theme: '*Enhancing Domestic Revenue Mobilisation for Sustained Economic Stability and Improved Service Delivery*'. But before I take the queue, let me just react to a few of the things said by the previous speakers for the edification of the

public and ourselves. A lot has been said about allocations to MDA: but let me just take you quickly to Annex [13], where examples of transfers are made to certain MDAs. And if we look at the trends of those transfers, you would realise that my colleagues who are laying premium on how transfers are not made to MDAs are wrong.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the details on Annex [13], there are series of MDAs, including transfers and retentions. So we really need to be honest with ourselves and for the edification of the public. For NatCA, NCRA, the National Telecommunications Authority and SMA, the trend at which the transfers were made for these MDAs ranges around **90%, 90%, 80%, 90%, 75%** etc.

So therefore, the transfers in 2024 for these MDAs were **94%**, with retention of 6; for 2025, it is **78%** transfer per Council, with retention of **22%**- those were my basic calculations done by myself.

Another issue raised by some of the speakers is, according to them, the high tax burden on citizens. To be very honest with ourselves, tax is one of the ways a country generates revenue, and this government has been very reasonable in levying taxes on the people. Few days ago, I ordered a Television set which costs about **\$879** and I ended up paying **\$950**; meaning **\$79** went as Tax, amounting to **7.3%** tax. So all over the world Tax is inevitable because countries raise revenue from taxes.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when we debate let us debate with our conscience and to educate the masses, especially when it comes to national event. I therefore want to look at the basis on which this budget was prepared. As programmers generally, we set objectives; and those objectives are what the programme tends to achieve at the end of the day. And therefore, the Ministry and the Minister of Finance have set out objectives which this Budget seeks to respond to. To me, and any other programmer, these objectives are very realistic. Mr Speaker, with your leave, I would go through them one after the other so that we all see how smart they are; very systematic, measurable, achievable, and time bound, for 2026.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to Page **2**, Paragraph **6**, an overarching objective of the 2026 Budget is to intensify domestic revenue mobilisation, including innovative revenue streams, whilst sustaining a public distant consultative efforts; this will help to preserve macro-economic stability, foster economic resilience and improve living standards.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Paragraph 7, Roman figure one to seven [i-vii] are the objectives set out by this government to aid this Budget to achieve. Below are the objectives:

[i] **Improved Domestic Revenue Mobilisation through tax measure:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of my colleagues were laying premium on tax burden, forgetting to know that you cannot run a government without resources, and you cannot mobilise revenue if taxes are not among the sources that account for the revenue to run the affairs of that country. So the Minister, the Ministry is on track to raise revenue, even though somebody was referring to it as '*gbolang, gbolang*' revenue. Even though NRA has been referred to as '*gbolan, gbolan*', my colleague Honourable Member must know that the role of NRA is to raise revenue from taxes and other sources; that was why it was set up – to raise revenue from tax and other sources for the country as a whole.

[ii] **Leverage on the domestic sources of mobilizing revenue:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, somebody said there was a time we had the fastest growing economy, but the irony was that, at the time we had a boom in the mining industry, that was the time that the government resorted to lavish spending; failing to realise that '*you make hay while the sun shines*', and at the end of the day we came back to square one. Therefore, the issue of fastest growing economy at that time was a deception.

So Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Budget can be termed as a Pro-poor Budget because it is actually a budget that fits the poor; our taxes are very low, and the objectives are very clear. If you look at what we aim to achieve in this 2026 Budget, it is to continue with the '**Feed Salon**' program.

The Honourable Member was talking of low product and the time bound issue for our agricultural seedlings; yes, Mr Speaker, this I can agree with. But again, that is why when designing agricultural loan products, we have institutions that actually have the expertise that can design agricultural loan products, taking into account the timeliness and also the visibility of how the loan repayment is spread out. I could remember when I was doing some course at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration that was one area I looked at- Agricultural Value Chain Financing; the design of agricultural loan product. It is very important to have expertise on how it is done.

[iii] ***Continued investment in human capital development:*** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of course this is another objective that this 2026 Budget aims to achieve. We have started it since the inception of this government, and the government may want to continue with that. Almost every country relies on its human capital to run the affairs of the State, and that is why we have trainings. So, it is prudent that it is mentioned that this Budget will give support to continue with the human capital development strides in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, regarding infrastructure, I heard everybody saying this government did not construct roads in Makeni and other places in the North. But let me tell you that if this Budget had not factored infrastructural development, somebody would have said so; but there is going to be a space for infrastructural development. So this Budget is very realistic and achievable, looking at the time line of 2026.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the global and domestic economic development and the domestic approved performance in 2025 is realistic. If you look at the projection and how it has slowed down from 2024; [3.8], and in 2025 [3.2], and it is projected at [3.5] in 2026 [*Interruptions*].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Budget is so realistic, and it can stand the test of time. The Minister and team have done a very good job; to set out objectives that they work towards. Honourable Members, if you want to do your oversight very well, look at those objectives and take the Ministry to task to know whether they achieve

what they promised to achieve. That is how we can hold the government accountable, especially during Appropriation.

Mr Minister, one of the things we have observed every year during Appropriation is lack of backup documents, especially for Consultancy Services hired by the MDAs. I therefore implore you to always ensure that MDAs come up with supporting documents for consultancies and contracts; it is only through that we can at least ascertain the scope of work and the budget. What we have notice is that most of the times those supporting documents are not made available by the MDAs, even when they may have promised to submit them later. For this year, please let them make those documents available so that some of us who are program oriented would lobby for those payments.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Domestic Macro-Economic performance in 2025 is very clear and good for purpose. Of course, I would not want to go into all of that because the Chairman, Finance has already spoken about that.

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

**HON. CHARLES O. ABDULAI:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the Domestic Macro-Economic performance in 2025, it is very good, meaning, the Ministry and the government are doing well in terms of budgetary performance at both domestic and international levels. Therefore, I want to confirm to Colleagues that this Budget is a very good Budget, and that we must fully support it, I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Charles Abdulai. Honourable Mamoud Kamara, you have the Floor.

**HON. MAMOUD KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the records: my name is Honourable Mamoud Kamara from *[Undertones]* Karene.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as we are gathered to debate the 2026 Budget, let it be noted from the onset that this document has a reason for our ordinary Sierra Leoneans to celebrate.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, a national budget should inspire hope; it should figure progress, and should demonstrate responsible stewardship. Yet Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what we have before us falls short of the aspirations of Sierra Leoneans; it does not reflect the urgency in their daily struggles, it reflects on the daily basis, ignoring the aspect of what this government is supposed to do for its people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this government and its budget to be specific, has nothing to celebrate about *[undertones]* what is there to celebrate? Are we to celebrate because the Budget of the President surpasses that of the Health Ministry, the Youth Ministries and that of the Sports Ministries combined?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because the Budget of the Secretary to the President surpasses that of the Health Ministry, the Youth Ministry and the Sports Ministry combined? Are we to celebrate the Budget at a time when our young graduates are struggling to secure jobs, and at a time when our young people are dying on the street as a result of Kush?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what are we to celebrate about? Are we to celebrate because there would be a **Le5** increment in the cost of a bag of cement in 2026?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because there would be an increment in the prices of cooking items in 2026?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because EDSA is charging **Le6** per kilowatt hour to our poor and vulnerable people? Are we to celebrate for that?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because there is a reduction in the pump price of fuel from **Le30** to **Le25**, when you were the ones who raised it from **Le6** per litre, are we to celebrate about that? Are we to celebrate because there is reduction in the bag of rice from **Le1, 000** to **Le750**, when you were the ones that raised it from **Le200**? Are we to celebrate the exchange rate of **Le2, 380** when you were the one who raised it from **Le750** to **\$100**, are we to celebrate? Are we to celebrate because University Fees have stagnated at **Le8, 000**, when you were the ones who raised it from **Le3, 500**?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate our food security, when every now and then we are seeing our young people collecting rubbish on the streets? Are we to celebrate the Free Quality Education, when our young people who are facing WASSCE do not know the places they are going to take their exams, are we to celebrate?

Are we to celebrate, when the government is doing little to protect the interest of the citizens from the Internet Providers who have not been providing better services since the inception of internet in this country, are we to celebrate?

Are we to celebrate because this government said there would be a **20%** increment in salaries in September of 2026; when that increment will automatically raise the basic salary to **Le1, 000** which can only cater for one bag of rice and little change?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate when the 2026 Budget did not prioritize emergency healthcare, and they have abandoned a 100 bed hospital at Lumley?

**HON. MOHAMED BILLOH SHAW:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. MOHAMED BILLOH SHAW:** Mr Speaker, for the edification of the public.....

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, allow the Member to continue; the Minister would handle it, thank you very much. Yes Honourable, proceed.

**HON. MAMOUD KAMARA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because this document claims that they would prioritize the intervention to address public health emergency, yet, they continually choose to abandon the 100 bed hospital at Lumley at the negligence of the few thousands that voted for the APC-government?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because this government choose to abandon an on-going road project from Sheriff Derive to Kaningo, are we to celebrate about that?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because this government choose to unfairly abandon a road project that was in progress from Kamayama to Pentagon, are we to celebrate about that?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, are we to celebrate because this government choose to abandon the Rural Electricity Project in the Northern Region, but went ahead and complete the ones that are in the South/Eastern Region, is that something to celebrate about?

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Budget offers no solution required to move our nation forward; this Budget will further deepen the suffering of the poor masses due to the Taxes that have been levied on every sphere of our economy. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Mamoud Kamara. Honourable Sarty Banya, you have the Floor.

**HON. SARTY BANYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I bring you greetings from Kailahun where over the weekend we had a supervision exercise through the Ministry of Health, including the commissioning of a Junior Secondary School in Luawa, Baoma which has been constructed by this government.

Mr Speaker, let me start by thanking the Minister and his team for submitting a very comprehensive Budget to this House; a Budget that geared towards the elimination of poverty and elevation of growth in our country; a Budget that is so specific and measurable. Mr Speaker, let me first of all respond to some points that were raised by the Honourable Member from Tonkolili who talked about government not paying attention to the needs of Tonkolili. In that regard, I just want to ask MPs from Tonkolili District what exactly are they doing with the Mining Concessions given to Tonkolili by the government? Another aspect I may like to ask you the MPs from Tonkolili is: have you not seen this government rehabilitating or constructing Magburaka Boys School in Tonkolili? Have you also not seen Solarisation going on in our various government

hospitals right across the country? Have you not also seen Oxygen Plant also at your district hospitals? These are all big projects being implemented by this government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me narrow down my point to few things: I want to take this House from Pages **172** to **173**, which talks about security matters. The sum of **NLe274.5MIn** is being allocated to the Defence Ministry, **NLe240.8MIn** to the Police, **NLe128.9MIn** to the Correctional Services Centre and also, **NLe9.0MIn** to the National Fire Force.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, all of us here will testify the fact that since the inception of the CDS in the Military, he has made rapid transformation in the area of infrastructural development and capacity building. We can no longer see our uniform men queuing to join transport vehicles because they now have a Bus on their own; these are all new development happening in the Military. Just two months ago, the CDS went to Makeni to commission a hospital at Tekor Barracks; these are all infrastructural developments undertaken by this government.

Coming to the Police, since the inception of the Inspector General [IG], William Fayia Sellu, he has also helped to transform the Police Force greatly. Now we refer to our Police Force as '**Force for Service**' instead of '**Force for Good**'. Let us take a look at some rehabilitation and construction undertaken by the IG or the Police Force in general. The previous government spent about eleven years without thinking of rehabilitating the Headquarters of the Police office; now there is rapid progress in the rehabilitation work at the Police Headquarters. Also, Mr Speaker can testify to the fact that a very nice Police Station has been constructed at Mattru-Jong, Bonthe District. Even at Aberdeen, a Police Station has been constructed. I also want to thank the present IG for providing vehicle facility to the Kailahun District Police.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, from the findings we made during our oversight visits at the Police and the Correctional Services, I would like to plead for an improvement in the timely allocation to those facilities based on the marvellous jobs they are doing in helping to keep our nation peaceful and secure.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other aspect I want to deliberate on is Energy; this government has spent hugely in the area of Energy. It is stated on Page **160** that **NLe60.9Mln** has been allocated for the completion of the Energy Plants in seven Districts. My District, Kailahun is benefiting from that; presently as I speak, there is an on-going electricity supply, although it is on an intermittent basis but yet, we appreciate it, and we are now craving for government to connect us to the CLSG so that we can have permanent and constant electricity supply.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Ministry of Energy to extend the electrification to Mofindor Section Mokindor Section which serves as a gateway *[undertones]* yes, it is done by the World Bank; that shows the level of donor confidence in this government. When you were in power, you were just carrying away everything to your private houses *[Applause]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said earlier, I was in Kailahun on Saturday, and I want to thank the Ministry of Health for taking a whole team, including the Minister and the Permanent Secretary to Kailahun for a fact-finding mission on the concerns raised by our people in that part of the country. In March last year, there was an allegation of consistent maternal mortality following the death of four people in Moyamba, and the Ministry conducted similar visit to Moyamba District. There were interesting revelations during the fact finding missions. One of the issues that came out had to do with Nurses who have been pin-coded but are not rendering their services. The Ministry has decided to take strict measures against such people by wiping off their names on the payroll, and the Ministry has already started taking action against Medical Doctors.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, sometimes we need to blame ourselves, we the Politicians; some people come around us to advocate for them for pin-codes, but when they are given these facilities, they cannot volunteer to move from Freetown to go to the Provinces, instead, they pay attention in carrying out other studies. I am therefore pleased that the Ministry is taking stringent measures against some of these defaulters.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the other thing I observed in Kailahun is that I saw

the whole place electrified; civilization and development has indeed started taking place in Kailahun. Also, an Oxygen Plant as big as a Warehouse has been stationed in Kailahun, and now people do not complain anymore about Oxygen service for their sick ones. That service is now being provided for the people on a free-of-cost basis.

Mr Speaker, I also want to thank the Minister because he is somebody who appreciates the efforts of people. That is why in his conclusive statement, he appreciated all facets; from his immediate boss– the President, Vice President, Chief Minister and his colleagues in the Ministry, including us at Parliament. This is what a very progressive human being should do because as we always go to Mosque and Church to appreciate Allah and Christ. So Mr Minister, keep up the good work and may God bless you, thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Sarty Banya.

**HON. MOHAMED PAPA BANGURA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank my colleague, the Honourable Member from Kailahun; and I also want to remind him that in a moment like this, when we debate such a very important document, we must think about the people of Jawei. Let us debate in favour of the people of Njaluahun, debate in favour of the people of Kailahun, and debate in favour of the poorest of the poor. Unfortunately, if we forget that our people are there, and we decided to politicise such a debate, then we would get it wrong.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Members from the other side always talk about the APC ruling this country for 10 or 11 years; they forget that in the Second Republic, President Kabbah of blessed memory ruled for 10 years, and now President Bio has ruled for 8 years. If you put that together you get 18 years compared to the 10, and you are always blaming President Koroma- that is very sad.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today, I want to first of all look at Infrastructure and Technology which Mr Minister talked about. According to the Votes Head, **Le792.9Mln** was allocated for the reconstruction of Roads and Bridges.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, early this year, President Bio was in Bumbuna, and in his speech during the payment of the CDA, he said when he visited the President of China, Xing Jin Ping, he asked him *'what can a developing nation do to be develop?'* Xing Jin Ping in his response said, *'go and construct your roads.'*

Mr Speaker, in that forum, speaker after speaker had to beg for the construction of the road leading from Magburaka to Bumbuna; which is one of the biggest contributing roads to the bread-basket of this country. But sadly today, that road is in complete neglect, and the people of Songoni and Kegbema are seriously affected, especially at a moment like this. Sadly enough, one of our colleagues, the Honourable Foyoh is coming from Kegbema, and I do not know how he feels when he visits Kegbema.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during State Opening, President Bio also mentioned that when Roads and Bridges connect villages and towns, poverty may reduce; that statement reflects on roads like the one leading from Magburaka to Bumbuna, and the road leading from Bombali to Karene. Mr Speaker, why can the people from a certain district or region be neglected?

Mr Minister, I see you as a very intelligent and articulate gentleman. But Mr Minister, let me remind you that the seat of power is not permanent; what is permanent is the legacy that you leave behind. Where is the famous J.J. Saffa today, where is he? The only thing people can remember him for is when he told them that they are 'Labboing', **S.O** [2]. Mr Minister you are a fine gentleman, think about these places; it is almost two years when the bridge between Bombali and Karene collapsed, and nobody is talking about that bridge. Mr Speaker, what have these people done to be completely neglected? It is sad, very sad, Mr Speaker. Sadly, the SLPP MP from Karene is here clapping, and I know how he came to this Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that statement of President Bio also reflects on the road linking Matotoka, Yele, Mongere in Valunia Chiefdom, to Bo.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that statement of President Bio also reflects on the road within the Municipality of Makeni and other areas.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister made mention of plans for the construction of roads in Makeni, but I see it as a deception, **S.O** [2], *'kemio kemediy'*. There is absolutely no plan of constructing any road in Makeni; it is almost eight years, and nothing has happen. It was upon the belief that road connection can lead to poverty reduction that His Excellency the former President Dr Ernest Bai Koroma constructed the road from Kenema to Kailahun, and it was on that same belief that President Koroma constructed the Kingsway Street and all other streets in Kenema, including the Masingbi to Bama Konta road.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to make this very important statement, and President Bio should listen to this: When you want to boost Agriculture, think about the construction of roads, and let it not be on political or selective bases. How can you abandon a project like the Karene Bridge? Mr Minister, think about it, and I presume your parents are from the North/West Region. I know you are from the Southern Region, but your parents are from North/West – Kambia, precisely.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, today is the International Day for Persons with Disability, and I want to join them to commemorate this day.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you look at the Appropriation Act, the amount allocated to the Commission for Persons with Disability is **Le3, 168,500**. And sadly Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Commission only received one quarter of its 2024 Allocation, and for the 2025 Allocation, not a cent has been received till today. Do you think you can get these people out from the streets with this type of arrangement? Now you are calling this Budget a Pro-poor Budget. If you go to Makeni for example, there are very serious people within that vicinity who are contributing to the transformation of this country. I would use a case study of a young man called K-man; K-man is a disabled shoemaker who, out of shoemaking is adequately taking care of his family and a whole lot of abled people. Alusine Koroma also is a popular tailor who is taking care of his family and employing abled people. That tells you that if we empower such people, definitely they would not be in the streets begging all over the place.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, during the State Opening of the Fifth Parliament in 2019, President Bio made mention of his government putting mechanisms in place to get our disable people out of the streets begging. It is sad when you drive around the city and see disabled people on Wheel Chairs begging. It seems the president's statement was just a political statement but the commitment is not there. How can you allocate just **NLe3, 168** to the Disability Commission, and you allocate **Le16Mln** to the Office of the Chief Minister? Is it because the Chief Minister is travelling with the President everywhere he goes? Mr Minister, read this Budget properly, I am sure President Bio may not have all the time to read it because the Jet is waiting.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as a member of the Premier League Board, I cannot end this debate without talking about Sports. Mr Speaker, sadly enough, when you also look at the Appropriation, **NLe8, 594,900** is allocated to National Sports Authority [NSA]. The other day, the Executive Director of [NSA], Emmanuel Saffa Abdulai was on Truth Media and he said the NSA owes Private individuals up to **\$800,000**, and now look at what is allocated to them; are we truly committed to develop Sports? How can such an amount be allocated to such a vital sector? And if you are talking about creating five thousand jobs for young people, let me inform you that Sport is that Sector that can help you provide huge number of employment for the youths. Now we have 18 Premier Leagues, each one has over 20 players registered, and they are all on payroll. I want to assure you that the current President of the Sierra Leone Football Association [SLFA], Babadi Kamara is a good man and he is committed to Football.

As for the Ministry of Sport, only a total of **NLe2, 266,500** is allocated to it, and the Ministry continues to be indebted. That is more the reason Honourable SOS referred to this Budget as a '*gbolan gbolan*' Budget, **S.O 2**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I said, I am a member of the Premier League Board, we have a Budget of **NLe8.4Mln**, look at what is allocated to the NSA today; it is not even enough to furnish just the Premier League Board, not to talk of the Female Premier League. But we are thankful we have a very young man who is committed to developing football; he is approaching some Sponsors and we are making steady

progress. But I want to appeal to you, Mr Minister, that as we talk about providing jobs for Five Thousand youths, let it not just be a political statement; let it be a real commitment and work towards achieving that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to remind Mr Minister once more about Makeni Government Hospital Road, including several other roads in that City. Let the people of Makeni not be neglected; they should be given fair treatment just like the APC did in Kabala, Kambia, Kailahun, Kono, and all other places across the country. People may forget President Koroma today, but they will not forget his legacy.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, hold on; Honourable Mohamed Papa Bangura, one more minute.

**HON. MOHAMED PAPA BANGURA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker as I end, I want to talk to the Minister again; Mr Minister, please remember this: people are quick to forget people, but your legacy will not be forgotten. As I said earlier, the seat of power is not permanent; what is permanent is the legacy you leave behind. We are looking forward to seeing something good for the people of this country. A lot of us are of the conviction that all the statements about political inclusion are just political statements, but the commitment is not there; nothing is happening in our City- Makeni City.

Finally Mr Speaker, all of us are talking about fighting Kush and other forms of drugs but it seems that the commitment is not there. The National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency is allocated **Le5Mln** while **NLe16Mln** plus is allocated to the Office of the Chief Minister, for what? So Mr Minister, please support the young man at the Football Association for football to grow. Mr Speaker, I want to thank you and I want to thank Honourable Members for giving me the opportunity to take part in this debate. Thank you very much, may God bless you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Mohamed Papa Bangura. Is Honourable Rebecca Yei Kamara still here? No, okay, Honourable Alpha Jalloh.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** For the records, I am Honourable Mohamed Alpha Jalloh of Falaba District, the land of milk and honey. I rise today, not to shower fake praises to the Budget as the Honourable Member from Kailahun did few minutes ago. Rather, I would rise to expose the dangerous economic gamble that this government is playing with the lives of our people. Let me from the outset declare that this is a scam and misdirected Budget. It is not a Pro-Poor or a Pro-Business Budget as the government wants us to believe; rather, it is a Pro-Interest Repayment Budget

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Mohamed Alpha Jalloh,

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Withdraw that statement

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, if you allow me I would justify my statement

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, what do you mean by a scam?

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Please allow me, and I would justify my statement, that is part of my debate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Be careful with your use of words

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Please permit me to justify my statement

**THE SPEAKER:** The word Scam is Scam, so withdraw that.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** That is right, it is deceptive, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Withdraw that Statement.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** I withdraw Sir, and I replace it with the word Deception

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we should bear in mind that we are Members of Parliament, and that is why we are referred to as Honourable Members of Parliament. A good number of us get agitated when debating we must

make sure we debate with respect. As Honourable Members of Parliament, we have the opportunity to critique the Budget, but do it with your conscience. Stop creating an impression that would depict criminal tendencies. This is a Budget that we are going to debate and pass it into Law. And if you begin to say this is a scam Budget, and making all sorts of negative words against this Budget, then it would sound as if we are unserious and reckless- that is what he is telling us. So let the Honourable Member withdraw some of those words because they are very un-parliamentary.

**HON. TAMBA KELLY:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes

**HON. TAMBA KELLY:** Mr Speaker, I think it is my Honourable colleague that is building a pejorative intonation *[Laughter]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, please sit down; your people in the Gallery would want to understand you, so please. Honourable Mohamed Alpha Jalloh, please, mind your use of words. We have words that are un-parliamentary; do not be un-parliamentary, use decent words *[Undertones]*.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** If only you can bear with me, Mr Speaker *[Undertones]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** If you use one more un-parliamentary language, I will stop you. Mr Clerk, please ignore that statement. Proceed.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, this is not a Pro-Poor or a Pro-Business Budget as the Minister or the government wants us to believe. Rather, it is a Pro-Interest and Bank Debt Repayment. Revenue raised from January to September of 2025 is **NLe13.4Bln**, and the Grants received from International Partners is **NLe2.8Bln**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you put together the Grants and the Revenue for this year, you would get a total of **NLe16.2Bln**; and the total expended between January to September of 2025 is **NLe21Bln**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this expenditure is expected to rise to **NLe30Bln** by December this year. So, just compare what we have and what we are spending to know the gap. Even though the Minister said the Revenue is expected to increase to **NLe18Bln** in the last quarter of 2025, yet I doubt that.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, out of this amount, the Wage Bill takes **NLe5.3Bln** and the interest repayment on our debt takes **NLe5.6Bln**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the interest repayment on domestic debt is **NLe5.3Bln**. Do you know what that means, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members? It means that the Wage Bill which is responsible to pay the entire workforce of the government is equal to what we are paying as interest to the domestic Banks.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, do you see the reason why I said this is a Pro-Interest Budget? We are in a situation where **NLe5.3Bln** goes to the Banks and **NLe5.3Bln** goes to the entire workforce of the government.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me shock you; do you know that the government domestic capital investment, which is the monies used to construct roads, hospitals, schools and tractors etcetera, is equal to just **NLe1Bln** for the whole year and yet, we are paying the domestic Banks **NLe5.3Bln** just as interest. When you compare that to what we are investing in Capital Investments like Roads, Hospitals, Schools and all, you would see why I said this is a Pro-Interest Payment Budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me shock you again; this year's overall budget deficit as of September is **NLe5.2Bln**, and by December, this is expected to go up by **NLe9Bln**. In essence, we have paid **NLe5.3Bln** as interest, but we are accumulating another debt of **NLe9Bln** just this year. *'Aaa bo Mr Minister, dis na broke-dn economy'*, **S.O** [2].

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what you just heard was for 2025; now let us examine what is happening with the proposed Budget for 2026.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the expected revenue for 2026 is **NLe22Bln**, and I wonder how the Minister intends to raise this amount when for nine month in 2025, he

managed to raise just **NLe13.4Bln**. We are waiting to see the magic he would use to raise **NLe22Bln** in twelve months.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that notwithstanding, if you put together the proposed revenue and the grants for 2026, you will get an aggregate of **NLe25.9Bln**, and the projected expected expenses for 2026 was said to be **NLe30Bln**.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what this tells us is that the Minister and the government are projecting another debt of **NLe4Bln; S.O** [2], 'dis na trus trus government'. This implies that for the first eight years the government has exceeded its projected budget deficit for four years, this was pointed out by the World Bank in their most recent report that was just published in November 2025.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me further shock you; do you know that this year's government Budget for the entire Five Big Game Changers, including the enablers was **NLe2.2Bln**? And during the Supplementary Budget, this was slashed to **NLe1.1Bln**, which is **50%** cut from the original budget.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we continue to fund government's priority programmes such as the Five Big Game Changers like this, then for the next five years, we are expected to allocate just **Le5.5Bln** and what will that do?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on. Honourable Mohamed Alpha Jalloh, one more minute.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if we are paying **Le5.5Bln** on interest annually and you multiply that by five years you would realise that the government is spending far less for the entire programme compared to the Interest payment to the Banks. That is why I said this is a government that prioritises paying the Banks instead of focusing on developing our country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if time permits me I want to zoom in to Annex [iii] so as to prove the next part of my assertion that this is a Pro-Flying President Budget. Mr Speaker, according to this Budget, the allocation for the President is **NLe145Mln** for this year, yet, the allocation for the entire Parliament, the entire Judiciary and the

Ministry of Tertiary and Technical Education is **NLe140MIn**. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you think this is bad, it would surprise you to note that the actual allocation to the President in Annex [iii] for 2024 was **NLe291MIn**, and then in the Supplementary Budget, **NLe255MIn** was also allocated for the president to fly.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you put that together...*[Interrupted]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Mohamed A. Jalloh, your time is even up

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** That is the Presidency you are referring to

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** And so? It is in the Budget; the President is in the Budget...

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable AKK, you are a very senior MP; what is that?

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Exactly, that is the Office of the President

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable AKK, you are a Leader, please sit down; please sit down *[Undertones]*.

**HON. SALLIEU O. SESAY:** Nobody mentioned his name, but his position in the Office.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** The Office of the President was mentioned, and not the President.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, it is alright. Sit down, sit down, both Leaders. Honourable Simeon Johnny, you have the Floor.

**HON. MOHAMED A. JALLOH:** Mr Speaker, please allow me to round up.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, you are done; sit down, sit down *[Interruptions]*. Honourable Simeon Johnny.

**HON. TAMBA SIMEON JOHNNY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the Minister of Finance for putting together this all important Budget.

Mr Speaker, I would start my take on this Budget with a quotation from Nicholas Fernando Machiavelli, who once said, and I quote, *'where the safety of an entity depends on the resolution that will be taken, there should be prior consideration of criticism, but the question should be, what needs to be done in order to save the integrity?'*

And also, in continuation, he said: *'Second to honesty are courage of purpose and unselfishness are the greatest attributes of a leader to place the care and protection of his men first and to share their burdens without complaint.'*

And that is exactly what you have seen since His Excellency, Julius Maada Bio assumed Leadership in this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I do not want to speak baselessly; I want to speak with facts, and I am going to present the issues clearly for you to see. When other MPs were talking about nothing being done about infrastructure, ...*[Interrupted]*

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker,

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Honourable AKK.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** The word **Scam** was considered un-parliamentary, and now the Honourable Simeon Johnny is using the word **Baseless** *[Undertones]*. Mr Speaker, we are copying it is up to you to say it is parliamentary *[Undertones]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable AKK, you cannot compare **Scam** to **Baseless** *[Undertone]*... Even your Leader, the Leader of the Opposition would tell you that you cannot compare the word **Scam** with that of **Baseless**.

**HON. SALIEU O. SESAY:** Mr Speaker, we just want to know whether the word **Baseless** is a Parliamentary language *[Interruptions]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Of course! Proceed, Honourable Simeon Johnny.

**HON. SIMEON JOHNNY:** Honourable Members, what have you done to the North-West and the North-East in terms of development? Check your list.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on. Honourable Aaron Koroma,

**HON. AARON KOROMA:** Yes, Mr Speaker

**THE SPEAKER:** I am still concerned that Honourable AKK is comparing the word **Scam** to **Baseless**...

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** No, I am not, Mr Speaker; let me be clear on this. I was asking your Office whether the word **Baseless** is acceptable in a debate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Of course

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** That is all I wanted to know,

**THE SPEAKER:** Of course

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** I have not said anything. I am not saying **Scam** is acceptable

**THE SPEAKER:** You should not have stood in the first place

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** No, Mr Speaker, I can use **Baseless** in a way you would not like.

**THE SPEAKER:** Well, do not use it in the way that I would not like *[Interruption]*; Honourable Members on my left, so should he use **Baseless** in a way I do not like? If I do not like it, I will stop you.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** That is why I am asking now

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, it is as if somebody stole your Android phone costing **\$10,000** and then another person stole your pen, costing **Le10**; and you say the one who stole the Android phone is unacceptable, but the one that stole the pen is accepted.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, no. Honourable Daniel Koroma, that argument is distinguishable; they are not the same issues, please. Honourable Simeon Johnny, proceed.

**HON. TAMBA SIMEON JOHNNY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Bath-Kanu is the Headquarter town in Karene District.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you go to Bath-Kanu, you will see a hundred bedroom Hospital that is currently under construction, and that is now a talk of the town. If the people of Bath-Kanu are listening to what some people are saying, they will shout at them and say: please, stop deceiving people because we appreciate what this government is doing for us in this part of the country.

Mr Speaker, the road from Kabala to Falaba... *[Interrupted]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Simeon Johnny, be careful with the way you use words, be careful.

**HON. TAMBA SIMEON JOHNNY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the road from Kabala to Mongo in Falaba was not passable in those days. People were finding difficult to travel. But today, travelling from Kabala to Mongor has been made relatively easy under this administration.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, what can you say about the bridge that is under construction at Tomparie? In those days, these were places where Crocodiles used to have their lunch on innocent people that ventured to cross the river. Those were the days if a Susu man tells his wife in the morning, **S.O** [2], 'Ma siga', until that man returns in the evening, the whole family will not be at peace because they will be thinking that he has lost his life to crocodiles. But pretty soon, all of that is going to become a history. Therefore, if we want to debate, let us appreciate what have been done so far.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, if you travel from Makeni to Matotoka in Tane; you go to Makali in Konikay Barina, and you move to Masingbi in Konikay, you would see the massive work that is being done in terms of electrification. After speaking with the man in charge of EDSA, he said very soon, they are going to energise all of those places to start enjoying 24 hours electricity; what else can you say again? Indeed, I know that we cannot satisfy everybody because no matter how you are fed every day you would want more. But what I am expecting from people is for them to ask for more; not to talk as if nothing has been done, when the facts are already there.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, when you read this Budget you would notice that Page 36 deals with Infrastructure and Ecology. Mr Speaker, I am just from Tonko Limba, Kamabana to be specific, which is the home town of the Deputy Speaker. An Agreement has been approved in this House for the construction of the road from Kambia to Tonko, and to Kamakwe, and President Bio will be in history for connecting Districts to their Regional Headquarters for the first time.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am not disputing the fact that the roads from Makeni to Konsho, to that of Gbendembu Guwahun to Sanda Tindaren were not important, but if you are coming from Kamakwe and you have your Regional Headquarter in Port Loko, I think you need a road to access Port Loko in a twinkle of an eye. Some people were saying that these roads were initiated during the last era, but I told them that action is better than intention. President Bio is a man of action, and President Bio is a man who believes that development should be disseminated to all parts of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I was in Falaba when the Agreement for the construction of that road was ratified. On hearing the information, the Limba people became very happy and they started singing in Limba. I would ask for permission for me to sing the song before I end my debate. Oh I wish DSPK was here, so that he would have interpreted it in appreciation!

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my colleagues MP *[interruption]*

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, I want to correct something; The Honourable Member said the Deputy Speaker was born in Kamabana which is wrong; it is not Kamabana but Kamasasi *[Undertones]*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Proceed, proceed.

**HON. TAMBA SIMEON JOHNNY:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, that is exactly what happened in the case of the reaction of the people in the hometown of the Deputy Speaker; the people appreciate what the President is doing *[Interruption]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my Honourable sister was talking about Agriculture, and I want to talk a bit in that regard. Mr Speaker, the last soil survey in this country was conducted since 1980. How can you embark on serious Agriculture when you do not know the soil nutrient of your country? So everything that people were saying was just lip service; our people only saw reality under the tenure of President Bio. One has to study the soil to know the nutrient of your country first, and that was exactly what the Ministry of Agriculture under this administration did.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I worked at the Sierra Leone Seed Multiplication Agency as a Seed Scientist with no less a person but Dr Robert Chankada. Agriculture cannot go without seeds – we have foundation seeds, and we have stratified seeds. Few months ago, the President was in Kambia to launch about 36 varieties of seeds. Because **70%** of our land in this country is acidic, we need to have seeds that are resistible to acidity; that is the type of seriousness we are talking about.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, My colleague Honourable Member was talking about Agricultural Input. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you cannot feed your country if you cannot talk about irrigation system. This is the first time we are seeing such a system. I have been to Tormabom with the Chairman of Agriculture, and we saw a massive work that is on-going in that part of the country. During the **80s**, under the Structural Adjustment Programme the late President Siaka Stevens subjected this country to food scarcity. It was stated in the Rome Agreement that government is not a good resource person, and that we need to boost privatisation. It was there and then that the Sierra Leone Produce Marketing Board [SLPMB] and all the other State Institutions were closed. Due to that Structural Adjustment Programme, government is now looking out for Private Investors. On our visit to Tormabom, we discovered that one of the largest seed growers in Africa, [Africa Seed] was fighting over a plot of land at Tormabom- the Chairman is here to testify that *[Interruptions in Noise]*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people were talking about Football and the money allocated to the Office of the President; remember the Office of the President is no longer catering for the President alone. Do you know how many offices are made up of

the Office of the President? Do you want me to name them for you? Do you think all the money allocated to the Office of the President will go into the pocket of the President? No, we have a whole lot of Institutions that are being supervised by the Office of the President.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, they were also talking about the Allocation of the Chief Minister. Honourable Members, do you know how many supervisory roles that the Chief Minister is playing? Just few days ago, the young man was all over the place; he was in Manowa to do some inspections on some government projects, he went to Magburaka to see the on-going work at the Magburaka Government Secondary School, he was also in Bo and other places performing his supervisory roles. Where do you think the money to do his supervisory roles is coming from? Somebody was also talking about institutions; you need to know the functions and the responsibilities of these institutions before you criticize them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I came to realise the significance of the Agreement for the Tonko Road when I lost my beloved brother, the late Honourable Ernest Dura; may his soul rest in perfect peace. It was only when the Agreement for the construction of the Tonko Road was reached that I concluded that indeed, the soul of my brother has arrived at the gate of Heaven. The late man actualized one of the plans he came to this House with. He and his SLPP Honourable counterparts were advocating for the people of Tonko Limba and now is the time for the people to benefit from a tarmacked road. I recall when I visited my mother-in law in Madina, we met Honourable Manso Dumbuya's vehicle stocked on the road and when he came out from his vehicle do you know what he said? He said I pray and I believe that this road will soon be constructed and by the time I die my corpse will be conveyed on a tarmacked road to my hometown *[Noise in Interruption]*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I recently called Honourable Manso Dumbuya to congratulate him after the enactment of the Agreement for the construction of that road; his prediction has come to reality.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I promised earlier, I want to sing the song which my esteemed and lovable Limba in-laws were singing after that Agreement was enacted. They were singing like this, **S.O 2**,

*`ar wah yo wah yo sangalaba ar wa yo*

*ar wa oh wah oh sangalaba ar wa yo*

*ar wah yo thimu SLPP ar wah yo' [laughter]*

Mr Speaker, the people were calling on SLPP to continue with its developmental strides, saying that SLPP is sweet. So Mr Speaker, I would title this Budget as a people-centred Budget. So let us all support this Budget and see the actualisation of this Budget, thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Simeon Johnny. Honourable Johnny, I think you stole the day *[laughter]*. In fact you are the best debater today *[laughter]*, thank you very much.

Honourable Minister, you may leave; I would allow you to make some initial interventions tomorrow.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Mr Speaker, I stand on **S.O [23]**.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue I am standing on is of great concern. Interestingly, we are working for the general good and the interest of this country. I was so amazed yesterday and I decided to expunge my Committee Report because of what I saw going round on the Social Media. Believe you me, our procedures and guidelines in operating within the confines of Parliament take no doubt. Let me draw your attention; there are times we do not talk, but when the need arises we will talk. Interestingly, when you come to Parliament, you do not pay to talk; it is free and open to everybody to talk. If you go to University or any Institution, you have to pay.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am talking presently as the Chairman of the Local Council and Community Affairs Committee, and I have not yet been relieved of my position. But I saw a written document from the Mayor of the Freetown City Council referring to one of my beloved brothers here as the Chairman of the Local Council Committee. She wrote a Letter...

**THE SPEAKER:** To whom?

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** She wrote the Letter Addressing Honourable Peter Yamba as the Chairman. I was surprised to see that because Peter is not the Chairman, I am the Chairman. I had to ask myself *'is this a plot or a coup'detat against my authority'*? Mr Speaker, I want your intervention on this because it is of grave concern because it was not done in accordance with the Laws.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on. Mr Clerk,

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** If the Mayor can write of that nature, referring to somebody else as the Chair

**THE SPEAKER:** Hold on, Honourable Member. What we will do, we would get the Clerk to write the Mayor to inform her that you are the Chairman; probably she needs to be told that you are the Chairman.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Well, she knows that; I have done my oversight functions there before.

**THE SPEAKER:** She knows that?

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Yes.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, she is ignoring you.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Well, I do not know where she got that particular name as the Chairperson; maybe she has another ulterior motive, I don't know.

**THE SPEAKER:** It is alright, noted.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Tell her to come and let us know ourselves better. We should learn to treat one another with respect. You should not say or do things that you do not know about; this is Parliament. So thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Clerk, Mr Clerk; when I say Mr Clerk, I am referring to any one of you. So please notify the Clerk to do a short Letter to the Mayor to inform her for her notice; that the Chairman for the Committee is still Honourable Kemokor Conteh. Honourable Kemokor Conteh, do you have a copy of the Letter?

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Yes, Sir, I would let you have it

**THE SPEAKER:** Give that copy to the Clerk

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** Thank you very much

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay.

**HON. KEMOKOR CONTEH:** I am the Chairman

**THE SPEAKER:** She should be notified.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker,

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity; I stand on **S.O** [23] to bring to the attention of this House a very serious issue relating to the Sierra Leone State Lottery, ACCORD Logistics and the NCP. Mr Speaker, the Director for ACCORD Logistics was summoned to appear before a Committee and he turned down that summon. Mr Speaker, I think that one was a breach of authority of this Parliament. The Sierra Leone State Lottery is a State Institution...

**THE SPEAKER:** Who is the Chair of that Committee?

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Honourable Veronica Kadie Sesay is the Chairperson

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, she is not here; who is the deputy? Okay, we will get the Clerk of Parliament to summon him.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Yes, Mr Speaker, let him be summoned

**THE SPEAKER:** We would summon him to come. Mr Clerk, please take note; let him be summoned to come to Parliament next week Monday, at 2pm prompt, they should be here.

**HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA:** Thank you.

### **ANNOUNCEMENT/ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 2:27pm, and Sitting was adjourned to Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2025 at 10:00am prompt]*