



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

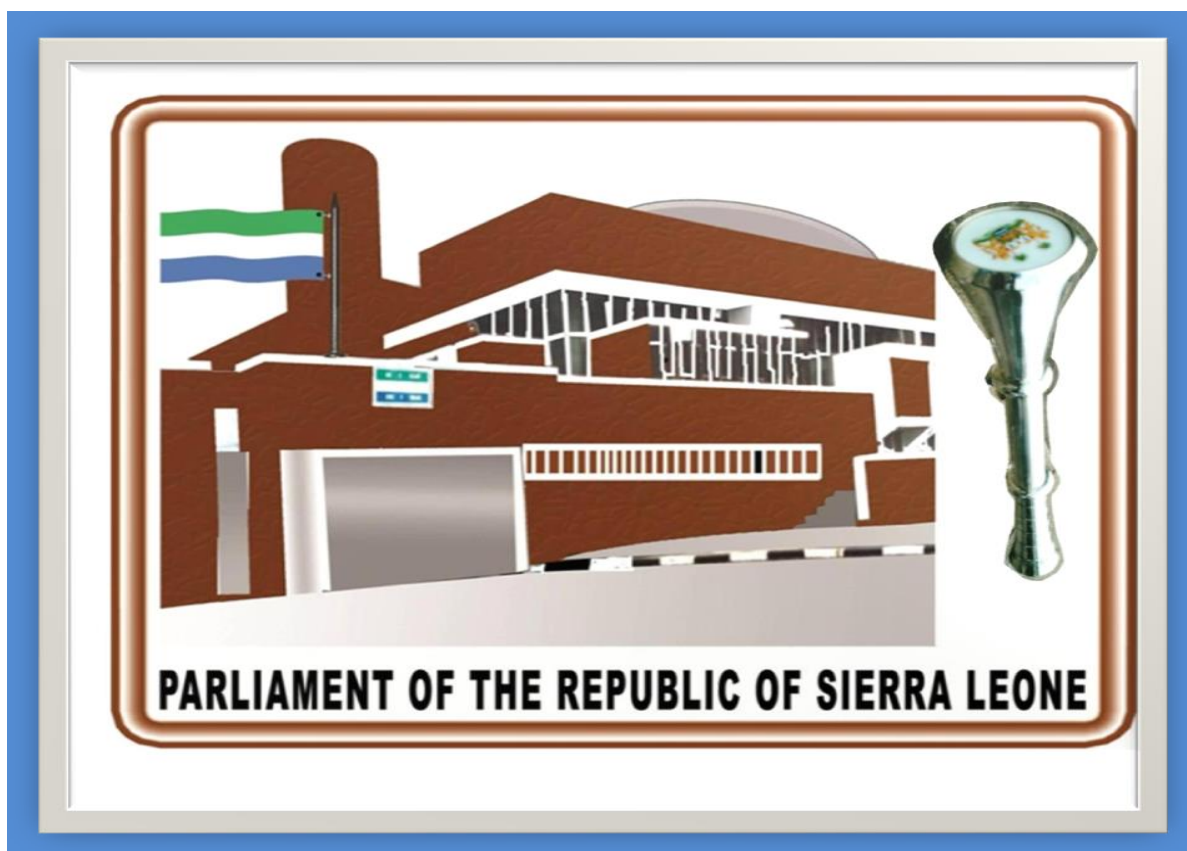
[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

FIRST SESSION –FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, 2024

SESSION – 2023/2024



OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[HANSARD]

OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT

VOLUME: I

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

Proceedings of the Sitting of the House
held Tuesday, 17th December, 2024.



THE CHAMBER OF PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

Official Hansard Report of the Proceedings of the House

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

Tuesday, 17th DECEMBER, 2024.

PRAYERS

[The Table Clerk, Mr Ismail Kabba read the Prayers]

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

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

The House was called to Order

Suspension of S.O 5[2]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings and as usual we skip pages 1 to 4. Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? Page 11? Page 12? Can a Member please move?

HON. NENEH LEBBIE: I so move Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. KOMBA QUEE: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question Proposed Put and Agree to]

[The record of Votes and Proceedings for Monday 16th December 2024 has been adopted]

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MR SPEAKER

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, there will be a meeting tomorrow with Mr Speaker at 2 P.M prompt in the Speaker's Conference Room with the Leaders of the Government Bench and Leaders of the Opposition.

PAPER LAID

**[i] THE HONOURABLE IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH
DEPUTY SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AND CHAIRMAN PUBLIC
ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, pursuant to Sub-Section 4 of Section 119 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone Act No. 6 of 1991, I rise to lay on the Table of this Honourable House the Auditor General's Report on the Account of Sierra Leone for 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Deputy Speaker of Parliament, there is another document before me do you have copy of the Performance Report? Then Mr Leader please do the necessary amendment of the Order Paper.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I think we can expunge this one from the Order Paper for now and we would do it on another date that we will be sitting. So Honourable Members, I move that item Roman VI [1] be removed from the Order Paper. Mr Speaker, I so move.

THE SPEAKER: Any Seconder?

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: I so second Mr Speaker.

[Question proposed put and Agreed to]

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

BILL

THE SAVE MOTHERHOOD AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE ACT 2024

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SANITATION

INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

DR JELIKATU MUSTAPHA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Act 2024 be read the First Time.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed To]

[BILL ENTITLED THE SAVE MOTHERHOOD AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE ACT 2024 HAS BEEN READ THE FIRST TIME]

SECOND READING

DR JELIKATU MUSTAPHA: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Act 2024 be read the Second Time. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is a privilege to address you today on behalf of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation on a mission that transcends politics which is safeguarding the lives of Sierra Leonean women and girls over the past decade we have made a remarkable progress in maternal and reproductive health. We have slashed maternal mortality by more than 60% in recent years and we no longer have the worst maternal death globally. We outperformed even some Sub-Saharan countries yet we must not confuse this progress as mission accomplished. We still as a country have one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world and our still birth and new born rates are even worst. Teenage pregnancy rates are unacceptably high with one in three girls reporting being pregnant by their 18th birthday and teenage pregnancy account for 14% of maternal death.

Mr Speaker, in this country we have very high numbers of unwanted pregnancies and limited access to reproductive health services of many women and girls in the country. We have 25% unmet need for family planning and tragically out of three hundred and fifty thousand pregnancies a year, almost hundred and fifty thousand of these being unwanted pregnancies and these end up in serious complication for our women and our girls. Every day in Sierra Leone we lose three to four women from preventable complications and these women are our mothers, our daughters, and our sisters. It is not just a health crisis; it is a national crisis that we must address now as a nation. As a Ministry we have set an audacious but ambitious target. We will not only work towards achieving the STG 3 target but we are even aiming for zero preventable maternal death and to do this we must address systemic issues across the board. This is the opportunity that perceives motherhood and reproductive health care Bill will give us. This Bill is a comprehensive document that has been developed with extensive consultations with Leadership of Government technical expert communities, Paramount Chiefs and Local Leaders and all other stakeholders that are relevant in this document.

The Bill addresses reproductive health care position across the country. It talks about pre- conception care ensuring that our women who want to get pregnant can get pregnant safely addressing infertility. It provides for antenatal support before pregnancy, during pregnancy ensuring safe child birth and delivery and postnatal support for the mothers and the babies including mental health service provision. It talks about basic emergency obstetrics care provision and essential emergency new born care provision. This Bill will address not only...

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Mr Speaker, before I draw your attention to the things that you have seen in your Chamber because people have given us job to do that is to be our representatives in this Chamber. The only Chamber we have in this country to make Laws for the State. Mr Speaker, let me draw your attention to Section [105] of the Constitution and with your leave I want to read and I am very forceful about the caption which is legislation and procedures in Parliament. It reads: "Subject to the provision to this Constitution, Parliament shall be the supreme legislative authority for Sierra Leone". Mr Speaker, you are fully aware of the power given to Parliament and you are the presiding officer. Mr Speaker, this same Parliament after a lot of bashings we sat together and enacted the Public Election Act 2022 and today we have over 30% women directly elected to Parliament. It is this same Parliament that repealed the Part Five of the obnoxious Law of the Public Order Act and it is this same Parliament that removed the death penalty. I am drawing your attention let the people allow us to do our job. We are aware of what you have done. We have position papers and we are a House that can listen. In a democratic society like Sierra Leone with the series of Bills that we have received and enacted them, we have got the accolade from the public for what we have done. We are aware of what the public is talking about and some of us are fervent Christians, some of us are fervent Muslims and we believe in all forms of religious beliefs. Mr Speaker, let them allow us to do our job. Mr Speaker, any Bill coming before us is a proposal is not an enactment.

Mr Speaker, there are two forms we can receive Bill through Government Motion and private sector which is referred to as the Private Member Bill. We do not want to fail;

we want to represent the people. In democracy you are ready for three things which are the good, the bad and the ugly. We are bashed for so many things that we are doing in Parliament but this Parliament is a progressive Parliament and a listening Parliament. Mr Speaker, with your leave we do not want people to influence us as if we are not considerate. This Bill is going to pass through so many stages; we are not discouraging you to remonstrate. We are also encouraging you to please allow us to do the job, a job that you can be very proud of at the end of the day. A job that you can see sense in what we are doing in this Parliament because we have the Paramount Chiefs, the Opposition and the Ruling Bench.

Mr Speaker, with your leave we cannot ignore the procedures in Parliament because we have heard the views of certain people. We cannot also ignore those who are against or those who are pro in terms of this Bill, the best we can do is to bring it to the Floor and debate it and look for an appropriate way to enact it. Mr Speaker, with your leave given to me, I know is your Chamber but for now I do not think we need these things at the moment.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader...

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Let me land Sir I will give you a chance, I am making a request.

THE SPEAKER: It is for me to allow you.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, this is your Chamber, if you want them to stay or not that is left with you Sir but for me I think we just want them to allow us to play the role of democratic society, a society we can accommodate all shades of opinions.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Mr Leader. Honourable Members, as you can see I have not complained, not so? This is my Chamber, I allow whom I want to allow. I do not see any reason why people cannot protest in Parliament [Clapping]. It is the

right for members of the public to protest to their Members of Parliament so let me hear you, Leader of the Opposition.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of course our primary responsibility here is divided into three. One has to do with representation; representation is very key Mr Speaker. We are here to represent our Constituents who voted us into office and what we do here should reflect their views, their aspirations and not our own individual aspirations like we say this is Parliament and which ever Law they want to come up with they will come with but it is left with our consciences and the people we lead to see how best we can go with the Law they come with. I do not want the public to nurture the opinion that it is a crime for any Bill to be brought or to be tabled in this Parliament. It is our own right; it could be through a private Member's Bill. It could be through a delegated responsibility but for it to be tabled here is part of our responsibility so I do not want the public to judge at this early stage. You just allow the process, we have our consciences we know what we are up to and basically we know that we are here because of you. We are not going to dismiss you with the back hand in totality so just allow the process; we want to assure you this is a democratic House. In democracy everybody would have his or her own views but what finally comes up should be the views of the majority.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you and I want to plead with you that we allow them to exercise their democratic rights to appeal to our consciences and thoughts but like the Leader of Government Business would say Members of Parliament are conscientious enough to do what is right for their people. I thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Leader of the Opposition.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I am fully aware that the Chamber belongs to you and your ruling is final because Standing Orders [42] is very clear on that. As Leader of Government Business, two groups called me and I said to them it is not in my domain whether in favor of the Bill to protest in the Chamber or whether you want the Bill to stay. I said it is the prerogative right of Mr Speaker to make ruling in his

Chamber to say whether let them remonstrate or not to remonstrate so those whom I talked to that is not in my domain to talk to you about having your remonstrations in the Chamber. The Speaker has the full right to accept or not to accept. He has made his ruling and that beside the point Mr Speaker as I said your ruling is final which cannot be challenged in any Court of Law. So those who are doing it today not knowing the fact that at the end of the day when there is going to be another issue in the Chamber when the Speaker rules against you would start to lambast the Speaker. It is the full right of the Speaker to do so, so as the Leader of Government Business I want to draw the attention of the public that is your own opinion.

THE SPEAKER: Who is going to lambast the Speaker?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: You know the people.

THE SPEAKER: Who?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: You know the people even when we are doing good things here they would start to lambast us. I am just saying that you have the right to make your ruling today which we would accept no challenge to that and whether is going to be for or against nobody is going to question that one. Thank you very much Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Leader of Government Business. Like I said this is not the very first day, members of the public are protesting in Parliament. It is their democratic rights to be here and as such I want to take this opportunity to heartily welcome you to the House of Parliament, this is your House you are always free to come here to tell us how you feel about any Bill or Instrument before Parliament so proceed Madam Minister.

DR JELICATU MUSTAPHA: Thank you Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, going back to the provisions of the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Act again the purpose of this Act is to save the lives of women and girls. This Act offers comprehensive reproductive health service provision across the country

and offers the responsibility and accountability to the Ministry of Health and Sanitation in providing these services. It covers preconception care ensuring that all women who want to be pregnant get pregnant safely, treating infertility to ensure care during the pregnancy and allows for safely delivery and child birth and prenatal services which include mental health services and family support. It offers basic and emergency obstetric care such as proper hemorrhage and blood transfusion and offers essential and emergency new born care protecting the lives of the new born baby. It also offers immunization and other treatment of childhood conditions with the aim to reduce child mortality. It covers friendly adolescent health services including comprehensive education to allow for choices in reproductive health. This will also entail prevention of unwanted pregnancies, expansion of family planning services, prevention and treatment of other reproductive health conditions that is risking the lives of our women and our girls. This includes obstetric fistula, it includes reproductive health cancers like cervical and breast cancer. It also treats and prevents sexually transmitted infections including HIV [Aids] and provides for the prevention, detection and management of sexual and gender based violence. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the role of the Ministry of Health is to ensure safe reproductive health services across the country for our women and our girls.

Mr Speaker, what the Ministry is trying to do with this Bill is to make sure every pregnancy wanted is safely cared for and enabling safe delivery of the mother and the child. This Bill will provide for every service during pregnancy. This Bill also speaks towards when a woman is pregnant and does not want to keep the pregnancy the first role of the Ministry in that instant will be to ensure that we provide counseling services and support services to this woman and do everything possible to encourage her to keep the child that is the first role of the Ministry. Again, when all of these failed and the woman wishes beyond all reasonable doubt to terminate the pregnancy, this Bill offers for the provision of the safe termination of the pregnancy under controlled regulated conditions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, our maternal mortality rate has several contributions and one of the significant contributions is unsafe termination of pregnancy. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, right now our law makes no allowances for this and it is illegal.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, despite the current Law, on average in this country we have over ninety thousand women choosing to terminate pregnancies every year as a result of firstly the high rate of unwanted pregnancy which this Bill will cover but more importantly 80% of these women result in severe complications including death. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill will not be the Bill to encourage termination of pregnancy and it is already happening and if I may use the phrase 'fiti fata' that is what is happening currently.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill offers the Government, the country, the Ministry of Health an opportunity to regulate these services. It is a Bill that is proposing regulation of all reproductive health services including termination of pregnancy which is currently happening in a very dangerous underground manner resulting to unnecessary loss of lives. This Bill offers the unexceptional circumstances under which the services will be provided. It offers strict legal framework within which they will be regulated including penalties for anybody who violates these regulations. It also offers accountability to the Ministry of Health in terms of service provision, in terms of the health care facilities, the trained health workers also offer opportunities for legal provisions for certain conditions including rape, incest, sexual penetration also in situation where the life of the woman is at risk under certified medical qualification these services are provided for in this Bill.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill also offers oversight to Parliament for the regulations of all these services including continuous reporting of the data which will enable the Ministry of Health to continue in providing these services across the country for our women and our girls. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill is about providing dignity, safety and equity for our women and our girls and it is not here to challenge cultural or religious values. It is balancing our health needs with these

cultural and our religious values. We are not reinventing the Bill here. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, seeing other countries in our region and out of our region, countries like Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tunisia, and Saudi Arabia have enacted similar Laws with remarkable results. They have demonstrated and there is dropped in their maternal death, had dropped in the rate of termination of pregnancy, in sexually transmitted infections, in teenage pregnancy when similar Laws were enacted and the country with unnecessary spending on reproductive health when they are dealing with the complications. It also promotes economic growth and poverty reduction by enabling our women and our girls to stay in school and to stay alive and to become contributing members in our society.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Bill aligned with other revolutionary progressive Law that this Parliament has passed to safeguard the health and wellbeing of women and our girls such as the GEWE Act, the Sexual Offences Act and the Banned on Child Marriage Act. Those progressive Bills that have been passed by this Parliament proved that progressive does not have to conflict with our cultural or our religious values.

To conclude Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Bill is not here to challenge beliefs. It is here to offer a life line for our women and our girls. It is here to safe guard the health and wellbeing of our women and our girls. It is here because we need healthy women who will give birth to healthy children to develop a healthy nation. By passing this legislation Sierra Leone will show that it is a Leader who cherishes the women and cherishes our families and embrace progress.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I implore you to use this opportunity to choose hope and dignity of our women and our girls and to be on the right side of history. Thank you very much and may your Leadership continue to light the way for our nation. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I move that the Bill entitled the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Act 2024 be read the Second Time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I am going to put the question for the second time but I am not going to allow any debate on this Bill. I am going to urge the Leader of Government Business to move the Motion for the committal of this Bill to the Legislative Committee and I will urge the Chairman of the Legislative Committee to ensure that he invites all those concern about this Bill including religious leaders because in as much as some of you might think that the Bill is okay, some of you might think that there is nothing wrong with the Bill another portion of society thinks that there are certain outrageous Clauses in this Bill that must be got rid of.

Honourable Members, we need to be true to ourselves that we are here representing the people. If we are true to ourselves and if we are true to our consciences that we indeed are representing the people then we cannot ignore their voices. I know as a matter of fact some Members of Parliament might think we were supposed to debate the Bill first but do not forget that even as I sit here I am the arbiter of the Standing Orders and my rulings cannot be challenged in any circumstance.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, before the question Sir, I want to join you to advise other stakeholders, other interest groups in as much as the Bill is going to be committed to the Legislative Committee if they have position papers let them please make it available to Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: I urge stakeholders to attend and bring your position papers along relating to some of the Clauses so that you tell the Committee exactly what you feel about that. Mr Chairman of the Legislative Committee, I would want a united Bill to be brought here, a Bill that the stakeholders agree on other wise please do not bother.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I started on the note by drawing our attention on your Chamber and I repeatedly stated the powers you have in your Chamber. You are the Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament, we duly and fully do not question that one but for evidence of proceedings let me now take you through because nobody is going to challenge the ruling of Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I rely on Section [94] of the Constitution which gives us power to regulate ourselves which the

Standing Orders speaks to the Constitution. Mr Speaker, I have received in my office series of position papers. I have also organized with the consultation of your very self for us to have a pre-legislative meetings. We also learnt from what the Minister presented to us this morning. Mr Speaker, I have just spoken to my Colleagues that because we rely on Section [94] of the Constitution, we would allow Mr Speaker's rulings to stand and we ask that we join our Colleagues on the other side but full consultation and participation this time is needed so we have not finished the Second Reading yet, it is still in progress. What Mr Speaker has done is to suspend the debate by his ruling and allow further deliberations at the Legislative Committee to take place. Mr Speaker, as I said earlier, we want to maintain that process that is why when I started I said in Parliament there is a procedure, we have not ignored the provision in S.O. [51] but with your ruling under S.O [42] with Section [94] as stated in the Constitution will do the needful and make sure full consultation is brought to the House.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you Mr Leader.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Let me reaffirm what you said that those position papers should be circulated to Members to know the position of the people of this nation. That is why I said I do not make Laws with emotions; I take my time to make Laws because I am a Leader of Government Business. I take into account of all shades of opinions. There are at times the opinion of the Opposition is different from the opinion of the Government but there are times we reconcile with them. There are times the Paramount Chiefs will not talk in this Chamber but they will give their advice. I thank you very much Mr Speaker for your ruling but for the neatness of proceedings, we have just suspended the Second Reading because we have not yet finished with the debate. I thank you Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I want you to be properly guided Honourable Members with Standing Orders 51[1].

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Parliament has the responsibility because I firmly believe that those who own various views relating to this very Bill may not be able to copy as

much copies for every Member of Parliament so I want to charge Parliament with the responsibility that once one copy is presented to the Clerk's Office, the Clerk makes it available to every Members of Parliament by multiplying the copies because this is crucial, this is sensitive, this is nationalistic and Parliament should be very careful Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I urge members of the public in presenting your position papers, present them to the Clerk of Parliament and send a copy to the Speaker, to the Leader of Government Business, to the Deputy Speaker and to the Leader of Opposition.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Mr Speaker, as somebody with a strong background in Constitutional Law. I just want to explore the said regulation which is provided by Section [94] it does not override the fundamental responsibility of this Parliament to make Laws. I am putting it in concrete legal terms what the Leader of Government Business was trying to convey. There is a digression in Section [94]; it cannot override the obligation in Section [105] that is not a challenge.

THE SPEAKER: It is alright.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member is a Lawyer and I am a law maker I did not override Section [105].

THE SPEAKER: Of course.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: I referred you to S.O. [51], I said the Speaker has used his authority as Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: But nobody has said anything against my authority.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Leader he was supporting you.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: I am really sorry Sir.

THE SPEAKER: He was supporting you and both of you are supporting me.

HON. IBRAHIM TAWA CONTEH: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are about to commit the Bill to the Legislative Committee like the Leader of Government Business will say for neatness of proceedings. It is also good that the public understands that the committal of the Bill is not principally influenced by their presence in the Chamber but it is part of the Parliamentary procedures and as a Parliament we want to be systematic and we want to be procedural. However, it is also important for the public to understand that the process of consultation is not binding on any person or authority as provided by Section 171[14]. We have to be clear about it that we can bring in your position papers, it will be taken into consideration by the Committee in terms of the drafting of the legislation because like Honourable Kellie put it the provision of Section [94] cannot override an entrenched Clause in Section [105]. Section [105] is an Entrenched Clause in the Constitution so whatever decision that is being taken today we have to understand that it is taken in line with Parliamentary procedures and not because the lower and the upper Galleries are full and not because banners were displayed that is what I want to submit Mr Speaker.

HON. REBECCA YEI KAMARA: Mr Speaker, this is not a debate but before we go for pre-legislative hearing I want people to know that the highest Constitution is the Word of God and the book of Deuteronomy 30 [19] which says: "This day I call the Heavens and the earth as witnesses against you and have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life so that you and your children may live". Children are the heritage of God so like arrows are in the hands of the warrior.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Point of Order Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: What is your Point of Order Mr Leader?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, nobody has contested the principle of natural love. I did not hear my Colleague on the other side clearly but when I stood up they told me exactly that he was supporting the context of the Constitution. We have not questioned anybody for remonstrance. We have accepted it and we said because we want to learn more we need to do more further consultations and we said we have

not finished the debate. Mr Speaker, going to the fact when you present a story as if we want to go against the natural Law and the principle of God is not good.

THE SPEAKER: She has not said so Mr Leader.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, when you said let us suspend the debate I agreed with you 100% based on what is happening now. We are talking through your good self that what you have said is clear to the public that we are ready to open up this discussion to other areas. Mr Speaker, given all your powers we have not questioned anything in front of us. We beg you Mr Speaker, let us give the Chairman of the Legislative Committee to do the consultation and have a better document in front of us. I thank you Sir.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, you want me to open a debate on this craftily but I am not going to allow it.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: No debate Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, we are here representing the people of Sierra Leone and when it comes to the people of Sierra Leone, one thing I want all of us to know when it comes to representation how we felt personally does not matter, it is what the people felt. In the first place you have a job and the people of Sierra Leone have employed you but what you feel is irrelevant to what the people feel that is the point so I do not want us to be individualistic.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: I personally feel that we are not doing justice for the fact that we have committed the Bill to the Legislative Committee because in as much as we have committed the Bill we should not prejudice our position whilst consultations have not yet been made and as Members of Parliament we should have an open mind because anything can happen after the consultation. Let us have a clear mind and open thought and let us go and listen to our people who have voted for us to be here and after which Parliament will be able to determine our next step but to say emphatically our position will not change I want to take the greatest exception to that Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Of course, in fact I heard that from the Deputy Speaker. We allowed our people to protest to us because their protests can be persuasive so that we look at what they feel about certain things then we inform ourselves but in any case let us proceed.

Honourable Members, the question is that the Bill entitled the Save Motherhood and Reproductive Health Care Act 2024 has been read the Second Time.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed to]

THE SPEAKER: Leader of Government Business can you move your Motion for the committal of the Bill?

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I see you are in a joyous mood today.

THE SPEAKER: Hold on let him announce then you move.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, you are in a spiritual mood today. Mr Speaker, I see the sensation of leadership in you.

THE SPEAKER: You should have known this.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, I have seen the other side of you today. May the Lord bless us all. Mr Speaker, as I said I am still making a plea with you for neatness of proceedings we are requesting that we continue the deliberations as a form of consultation so is a direct ruling. Mr Speaker, we want your direct ruling, let us suspend the debate and take every aspect of this Bill to the Chairman of the Legislative Committee.

THE SPEAKER: I have ruled ever since Mr Leader of Government Business.

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Let me come to your desk please.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much Members of the public. You are welcome to the House of Parliament and we appreciate you for expressing your positions but please keep cool. Honourable Members, take your seat. Like I said we are putting a hold on

the debate until a consultation is done. This matter is referred to the Chairman Legislative Committee for proper consultation. I so rule.

HON. ABDUL KARGBO: Mr Speaker, let me make this very clear our consultation with the Leader of Government Business and the Speaker is not to influence anything on the Bill. We were consulting on parliamentary procedures and processes so let nobody nurture the perception that anybody is against or anybody is in favor. We were just consulting on the parliamentary processes and procedures. This is a House of Law and all of us here are law makers so please let us do not misunderstand anything and every Member of Parliament has the right to his or her opinion that was why he or she was voted in to this House. We all came contingent on the vote we had from our people so nobody should restrict what a Member should say or what a Member should not say that just my candid opinion Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: This Bill is referred to the Chairman Legislative Committee to lead the consultation after which we will come back. Thank you very much that is my ruling and Madam Minister you are released.

BILL

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

THE APPROPRIATION ACT 2025

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

[CONTINUED DEBATE]

THE HOUSE RESUMED TO COMMITTEE STAGE

HON. MATHEW S. NYUMA: Mr Speaker, Point of Order. Mr Speaker, I want some decorum in the Chamber especially on my own side. I am asking Members to sit down please.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members can you please sit down.

MISS KEMA SAM KPAKRA: Vote 311-01, 123-01, 141-01, 146-01, 214-01, 215-01, 420-01, 304-01, 305-02, 323-01, 346-01, 107-01, and 107-01 to stand part of the schedule.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr Minister, before you move you came to this House I did not see you. When you come to the House of Parliament your first point of call should be Mr Speaker. You can proceed please.

MR SHEKU AHMED FANTAMADI BANGURA: Thank you Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that the following Votes stand part of the schedule.

300-01 Ministry of Technical and Higher Education **Le 47,237,100**

300-03 Tertiary Education Commission **Le 6,789,800**

311-01 Health Service Commission **Le 6,526,500**

123-01 Public Service Commission **Le 4,210,700**

147-01 Government Printing Department **Le 4,073,900**

146-01 Ministry of Western Region **Le 2,963,300**

214-01 National Cyber Security Coordination Center **Le3,631,600**

215-01 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner **Le 679,000 42001**

Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency **Le 100,786,300**

304-01 Ministry of Health and Sanitation Le **131,692,700**

305-02 National Commission for Persons with Disability **Le 3,168,600**

323-01 National Public Health Agency **Le 9,000,000**

346-01 Allied Health Professional Councils **Le 500,000**

107-01 Bonthe District Council **Le 10,476,968**

107-01 Karene District Councils **Le 10,904,657**

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, the question is that the following Votes have been pronounced by the Minister stand part of the schedule.

[Question Proposed]

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on behalf of the Committee...

THE CHAIRMAN: Hold on Honourable Rosy Kanu. Please you go to the findings then you go to the recommendations otherwise we will sleep here.

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Thank you Mr Chairman. I stand here on behalf of Group 10 to submit our Report on the Budget Appropriation Committee. Page 1 has stated. Introduction has stated. MDAs account heads and allocations has stated. Objectives of the exercise has stated. Committee Members are, Honourable Rugiatu Rosy Kanu as Chairperson of the Committee, Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, Deputy Chairperson, Honourable Mabinty Fornah, Honourable P.C Haja Fatmata Bintu Koroma, Honourable Abdul Karim Kanu, Honourable Peter Yamba Koroma, Honourable Rachel Rugiatu Sesay Pessima, Honourable Gibrela Moijueh, Honourable Konkofa farah Mansaray, Honourable Mariama Munia Zombo, Honourable Ibrahim Barrie, and Honourable Idrissa Dauda. At the Secretariat we have David Saffa the Lead Clerk, Ibrahim Bah Assistance Lead Clerk, Zainlyn Campbell, Clerk and Isata Bangura Parliamentary Budget Officer. General observations and recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, during the exercise the following general observations and recommendations were noted. The Committee observed that the total allocations approved by the House of Parliament...

THE CHAIRMAN: Hold on Honourable Rosy Kanu. To the Deputy Speaker, I am expected to go with you and the Leader of Government Business and the Clerk of Parliament to State House. You know we have this meeting at 12 O'clock but can you take the seat so that I can attend or you still want to attend? I want you to take the

seat because I do not want to stand this House down for that long probably we will be there for one to two hours so please take the seat.

THE HOUSE STOOD DOWN AT 11:47 A.M.

THE HOUSE RESUMED AT 11:58 A.M

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, during the exercise the following general observations and recommendations were noted. The Committee observed that the total allocations approved by the House of Parliament for MDAs were not the actual amount received by the MDAs that there were either decreased or increased in the final funds disbursed to the MDAs. The Committee observed that there was lack of timely release of MDAs allocation. The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance releases on time allocation to MDAs in order for the MDAs to carry out their mandate effectively and efficiently. The Committee further observes that delay in the release of allocations resulted in unfinished activities and projects that are rolled over to the current financial year. These roll over expenditures were not properly defended by Vote Controllers and could also be a recipe for miss-direction of public funds. The Committee recommends that MDAs prioritize their annual activities in order to meet key performance indicators. Some MDAs presented their questionnaires very late due to the delay in filling their questionnaires. This affected the work of the Committee very seriously which caused delay in conducting public hearings.

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Chairperson, I do not intend to interrupt you but would you give the House a list of the MDAs that submitted their Reports late?

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Yes I will get there. This is just the general observations, and then I would go to the details. Some MDAs submitted their budgets to the Ministry of Finance that is more than their ceilings that was advised by the Ministry. Some Vote Controllers failed to sign their questionnaires before presenting them to the Committee for the Committee to stand down the MDAs and allow them to

sign their questionnaires. Most MDAs had cash balances that were brought forward that led to excess amount expended on what was received in the current fiscal year.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Tertiary Education Commission is a cooperate one. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Commission submitted a budget of Six Million Five Hundred and Thirty Two Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty Leones on a budget ceiling of Six Million Four Hundred Thousand Leones. Approval was recommended for an amount of Six Million Leones but Five Million Two Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand Leones was allocated by the Ministry of Finance at the end of third quarter 2024, the Commission had received One Million Eight Hundred Leones from the Government of Sierra Leone regular budget. Three hundred and Sixty Nine Thousand One Hundred and Eighty Four Thousand Two Hundred Leones from Donations and Grants and One Million Three Hundred and Sixty Six Thousand One Hundred and Fifty Five Leones from other revenues which included registration fees, renewal fees, and accreditation fees. The Commission received as at September 2024 the total sum of Three Million Five Hundred and Thirty Five Thousand Three Hundred and Forty Leones.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Commission generates revenue mainly from registration fees, accreditation fees, and renewal fees. In addition to Government subvention, the TEC did not meet its revenue target for the fourth quarter of 2023 and targeted revenue was Two Million Eight Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand Two Hundred and Twenty One Leones but generated Five Hundred and Twenty Two Thousand Four Hundred and Sixteen Leones. The Commission did not meet its target for both quarter one and two of 2024 fiscal year. However, the Commission made a target of Ten Million Five Hundred and Eighty Thousand Nine Hundred and Four Leones for 2025 fiscal year. For the period under review there were significant variances between projected revenue and actual revenue across all revenue streams in 2024. This according to the Chairman is because the Commission generated most of its revenues from private universities and colleges. Some of which do not have the required number of students for the programs they are offering. This reduced their revenue base and consequently affected their ability to meet their financial obligations with the Commission. The Commission has

however taken steps to intensify its debt collection effort to ensure that tertiary education institutions settle their outstanding balances on timely bases. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, sharp decline in the Commission's revenue in 2024 fiscal year affected the achievement of key deliverables for 2024 fiscal year as follows: Policy development, open distant learning, guide lines for development of programs courses and materials and bench mark on minimum academic standards.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you take us to the key findings? If you take us to the key findings it will help us but if you say you are going to read the entirety of the Report I am sure by the time you finish your Report we would have spent one hour.

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Mr Chairman, the key findings although the TEC appreciates the effort made so far by the Ministry of Finance to provide subvention for its running, the Commission is constrained most of the time by delays in the provision of funds from the Government. In some instances, despite the several efforts that would have been made to secure funding from this source they have had caused to write off expected subvention because of the lapse of time and as advised by the Ministry of Finance. Recommendation, Mr Chairman Honourable Members, after thorough analysis of their budget, the Committee unanimously recommended the following that the proposed budget ceiling of Six Million Seven Hundred and Eighty Nine Thousand Eight Hundred Leones for 2025 fiscal year be approved. The Ministry of Finance should timely remit the annual subvention of the Commission so that in future the Commission should not include Grant received as generated revenues.

Vote 305-02 National Commission for Persons with Disability. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, for 2024 fiscal year the Commission made a budget submission of Seven Million Six Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand Leones to the Ministry of Finance after its examination and scrutiny the Commission was allocated the sum of Three Million One Hundred and Sixty Eight Thousand Leones. As at September 2023, the Commission received the sum of One Million Four Hundred and Twenty Five Thousand Eight Hundred Leones from the Government of Sierra Leone. Regular budget which is way

below what was allocated and approved also the Commission received funds from Donations or Grants for the aforementioned fiscal year on the tune of Two Hundred and Eighty Thousand Leones. As at September 2024 the Commission has expended One Million One Hundred and Ninety Nine Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty Leones from Government allocations and Grants received showing an excess expenditure on what was received. Also proven questions put to the Commission by the Committee it was ascertained that the excess amount of Forty Five Thousand Leones was brought forward by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Commission suffered due to the disbursement of quarterly allocation, inadequate knowledge of disability issues by the populace leads to persistence negative attitude towards people with disability. They were challenged by the lack of adequate staff especially in the region. There was a lack of collaboration especially with persons working in the sector. There is a lack of disability unit in MDAs to implement provisions of the Disability Act of 2023.

HON. NENNEH LEBBIE: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I move that S.O. 52 be suspended for the business of the House to continue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Any Seconder?

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: I so second Mr Chairman.

[Question Proposed Put and Agreed to]

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, for the next Vote when you read the Vote head, all the issues with regards the allocations, the utilization in disbursement let it be as stated. We move straight to the key findings and recommendations.

HON. RUGIATU ROSY KANU: Thank you Mr Chairman. The last key finding was an inadequate support from development partners. There were inadequate funds to respond to the request and issues affecting people with disability across the country and the Commission lacks logistics support like vehicles, motor bikes to do their work.

Recommendations, the Committee considers the allocation of Three Million One Hundred and Sixty Eight Thousand Six Hundred Leones to the Commission as adequate and therefore recommended its approval. However, the Ministry of Finance should disburse their quarterly allocations on time in order for them to meet their mandate especially in the area of complementing the effort of Government and providing welfare for the disabled people and also to provide logistic support like motor bikes.

Mr Chairman, Vote 304-01 Ministry of Health and Sanitation. Introduction has stated. Payment of beds and clearing of tertiary hospitals as stated. Budget analysis as stated. Key finding, the Ministry was seriously constrained by the late disbursement of funds, inadequate medical equipment at various hospitals and that of inadequate staff. Recommendation, the Committee considered the allocation of One Hundred and Thirty One Million Six Hundred and Ninety Two Thousand Seven Hundred Leones to the Ministry as inadequate and therefore recommends that the Ministry considered for supplementary budget. Also considering the relevant and crucial activities of the Ministry on the Government should provide the Ministry with the necessary equipment and adequate funding.

Mr Chairman, Vote 214-01 National Cyber Security Coordination Office. Key findings, the center lacks the governing data protection affecting regional and international collaboration. There is a lack of cyber security curriculum in the education sector. The center was seriously affected by the delay of releasing quarterly allocations. The institution was also seriously affected by the insufficient fund allocated to them particularly in the implementation of critical initiatives such as awareness raising, skills development and strengthens the digital eco system. Lastly, there were challenges in building the capacity of enforcement Agencies due to constant rotation of staff. Recommendation, the Committee considered the allocation of Three Million Six Hundred and Thirty One Thousand Six Hundred Leones to the centers as adequate and therefore recommends its approval. However, the Ministry of Finance should disburse their quarterly allocations on time considering the sensitive nature of its operation and the need for its information and technology advances.

Mr Chairman, Vote 323-01 National Public Health Agency. Key findings, the Committee noted with concern that due to the inadequate Government allocations the Agency expended all what they received. They were left with no option but to use the funds received for M-pox to run their office until another funding is made available. The Agency was challenged in recruiting the required number of staff to fully operationalize the Agency. The office space they acquired was not enough to accommodate all staff for the time being owing to lack of funding they could not rent more office space to accommodate all staff. Since the Agency submitted a request for funding the Agency could not get an approval from the Ministry of Finance to carry out the Kush activities across the country. The budget ceiling from the Ministry of Finance is not enough to run all the operations of the Agency. The Agency would be very challenged to fund their activities with such a limited resources and funding.

Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee considered the amount of Nine Hundred Thousand Leones as inadequate therefore the Agency should be considered in the supplementary budget. Also, the Committee recommended that the Government allocates more funding towards the fight against Kush including providing the Agency with the necessary resources and logistics.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, Vote 300-01, Ministry of Technical and Higher Education. The Ministry suffered due to late disbursements of quarterly allocations. There was limited number of professional and auxiliary staff. The Ministry was challenged by limited number of office space. There was insufficient number of working tools and there was limited number of mobility to enhance proper operations. Mr Chairman, recommendations, the Committee recommended the approval of Forty Seven Million Two Hundred and Thirty Seven Thousand One Hundred Leones that was allocated to the Ministry to be approved.

Mr Chairman, Vote 123-01 Public Service Commission. Key finding, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee observed that the recruitment, transfer and promotion of staff was very slow due to late budgetary allocation from the Ministry of

Finance. Recommendation, the Committee considered the allocation of Four Million Two Hundred and Ten Thousand, Seven Hundred Leones to the Commission as adequate and therefore recommended its approval. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance gives timely allocation to the Public Service Commission considering the important role it plays in recruiting, promoting and the placement of public service workers who are responsible to implement all Government policies. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, any decrease in the Commission budget or delay in the disbursement of funds by the Ministry of Finance will affect the following areas. The number of intended recruitment for the year 2025, confirmation and promotion of Civil Servants, human resource audit in public service entities.

Mr Chairman, Vote 146-01 Ministry of Western Region. Key findings, the Ministry faces serious challenges due to late disbursement of quarterly allocations. The Ministry also faces inter Agency challenges. Some MDAs were not willing to work or collaborate with the Ministry. The Ministry lacks adequate staff to carry out activities that would achieve the Ministry's mandate. The Ministry lacks the necessary tools and logistics to adequately and effectively execute their mandates. The Ministry has no vehicle for the Ministry and the Minister. The Ministry lacks adequate office space to comfortably execute its mandates. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, a decrease in the original budget submitted will affect the following areas: Administrative running cost of the Ministry, the programs that were intended to be implemented by the coordination within the Western Urban and Western Rural will not be fully implemented.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee observes during the sitting that more sensitization and community engagement is needed to bring governance and Government policies closer to the people hence budgetary allocation is needed for these activities. Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee recommended that the Ministry of Finance increases the budget allocation given to the Ministry of Western Region and increases sensitization and outreach to both Headmen

and community stakeholders. Also, the Government should provide the Ministry with necessary support including logistics to effectively carry out its mandates.

Mr Chairman, Vote 311-01 Health Service Commission. Key finding, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, it was observed that the budgetary allocation given to Health Service Commission to cover policies and implement quality health care is inadequate hence supplementary budgetary allocation should be considered by the Ministry of Finance. Recommendation, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee considered the allocation sum of Six Million Five Hundred and Twenty Six Thousand Five Hundred Leones as inadequate and strongly recommended that the Ministry of Finance increases the budgetary allocation of the Health Service Commission to cover very important area like health insurance and policy for public sector workers.

Mr Chairman, Vote 141-01 Government Printing Department. Key findings, lack of adequate funding crippled the efficiency and effectiveness of the department in undertaking activities. There were difficulties in accessing printing materials in the country. There were difficulties in accessing Engineers and Technicians in the country. The work of the department was also seriously hindered by the lack of mobility like vehicle facilities and others. The department was also affected by the delay of funds.

Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee considered the allocation of Four Million and Seventy three Thousand Nine hundred Leones made to Government Printing Department as adequate and therefore recommended its approval.

Mr Chairman, Vote 420-01 Environmental Protection Agency. Key findings, in terms of revenue generation the Committee noted that EPA is not receiving any revenue from Timber Administration the reason for this according to the Executive Chairman was that Timber Administration falls within the purview of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry which implies the responsibility of collecting revenues and reporting accordingly rests with the Ministry of Agriculture.

Recommendation, the Committee considered the allocation of One Hundred Million Seven Hundred and Eighty Six Thousand Three Hundred Leones for the Agency as

inadequate and therefore recommended for more budgetary allocation considering the nature and scope of their activities in preventing our environment. The Committee also recommended that an engagement is made with the Ministry of Agriculture for possibility of transferring the mandate of timber to EPA.

Mr Chairman, Vote 346-01 Allied Health Professional Council. Key findings, the Council has never received any funding from both the Government and Donors. The Council does not have any office space rather the Registrar and other two other personnel are using the office space of the Chief CHO. The lack of office space has caused lack of coordination of administrative task and providing services to Allied Health Professionals and the public has become a problem. The Registrar and two others personnel are yet to receive their first salaries. The Council has made several efforts to the relevant authorities but they were yet to have positive result. They were asked to present their conditions of service which they have also made several efforts to secure but could not get positive outcome at the moment and the lack of dedicated budget has hindered the Council's ability to hire and pay staff salaries thus affecting the morale and productivity. The ongoing delay in the approval of the 2023 supplementary budget has compounded operational difficulties making it challenging to plan for future activities and facilitate necessary functions.

Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, considering the challenges the Committee considered the allocated amount of Five Hundred Thousand Leones as inadequate, and therefore recommends that the Ministry of Finance increases the budgetary allocation given to the Allied Health Professional Council in order for the Council to be able to effectively runs its administration but not withstanding the Committee recommends that the Council be provided with comfortable office space with all the necessary logistics and equipment.

Bonthe District Council Vote 107-01. Key findings, the Council did not receive funds on time. The conditions of workers are not motivating. There is an issue of staff retention. There is a serious issue of revenue generation by the interference of Chiefdom Councils

and lack of compliance with payment of taxes. Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee considered the allocated sum of Ten Million Four Hundred and Sixty Seven Thousand Nine Hundred and Sixty Eight Leones as adequate and therefore recommended for approval. Also this Honourable House should look at the issue faces by the Council in terms of revenue generation especially that which has to do with the issues between the District Council and that of the Chiefdom Council.

Mr Chairman, Vote 107-01 Karene District Council. Key findings, there were serious concerns between the District Council and that of the Chiefdom administration especially in collection of taxes. Market dues are only collected by the Chiefdom Administration with the Council's involvement. Local taxes are printed and distributed by only the Chiefdom Administration. The Council sometimes receives threatening remarks when they make attempt to collect taxes. The Committee noted that the rate set for certain businesses were very minimal and that is the more reason why the Council's revenue generation was very small. According to the Chief Administrator the District administration has not been complying with relevant provision in the Act. The Committee expressed concerns in manner where the Council gives license to Herbalist without proper scrutiny.

Recommendations, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee considered the allocated sum of Ten Million Nine Hundred and Four Thousand Six Hundred and Fifty Seven Leones adequate and therefore recommended its approval. Also this Honourable House should look at the issues faced by the Council in terms of revenue generation especially that which has to do with the issues between the District Council and that of the Chiefdom Administration. The Committee also recommends that the evaluation committee be set up involving the Paramount Chiefs to scrutinize and determine the scope of service before licenses are issued to Herbalists. In addition, the Council should review the tax rate some businesses pay to Council especially the entertainment centers, restaurants, cattle rearing, fuel stations, to name but a few and make the necessary increment.

Mr Chairman, Vote 215-01 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. Key findings, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee made several efforts including sending memos and making several phone calls to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner with regards to the budget appropriation hearing. The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner neither sent their questionnaire nor did they appear for the scrutiny. However, through a phone call discussion with the Chief Medical Officer, the Committee noted that the Vote Controller was not in town also the office is a newly established office which is in the process of getting its fully operational. There was an allocation made to the office however the office is yet to get the required executive clearance in order to be able to access those funds to operate fully.

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, for 2025 fiscal year the Ministry of Finance made an allocation of Six Hundred and Seventy Nine Thousand Leones to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner in order to ensure that the plan deliverables for 2025 is achieved. Recommendation, considering the fact that the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner did not send any filled questionnaire and they were not present for the budget scrutiny the Committee therefore recommended that the allocation of Six Hundred and Seventy Nine Thousand Leones made to the office being withheld until their budget is scrutinized.

In conclusion, Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, the Committee hereby recommends that the Report of the Budget Appropriation Sub-Committee 10 be adopted by this Honourable House and the budgets heads including sub-heads of MDAs listed below stand part of the schedule in respect of budgetary provisions of the financial year 2025.

HON. JOSEPH WILLIAMS-LAMIN: Thank you Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I want to add my voice to Vote 300-01 the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education taken into consideration of Section [62] of the 1991 Constitution being the supervising Ministry with all the 115 tertiary institutions we have in Sierra Leone which are 11 universities, 15 colleges and 89 tertiary institutions around the

country. I strongly believe that the proposed budgets of Forty Seven Million Two Hundred and Thirty Seven Thousand One Hundred Leones is good for this Ministry so that they could do their job but my humble appeal to the Ministry of Finance with the abled Minister that, there should be a timely budget and especially that area that has to do with the backlog of the Granting Aid. We have given so much Granting Aid to the different universities across the country and therefore they have factored this amount in to their annual budget to pay these monies. The pressure is not only limited to the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education but also the Committee of Technical and Higher Education in the House of Parliament where they are often calling the Chairperson and other Committee Members so as to pile pressure on the Ministry of Finance for the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education to be given what they deserved.

Mr Chairman, Vote 300-03 the Tertiary Education Commission [TEC], this particular Commission which I have highlighted some of the institutions that they are dealing with specifically we should make sure that they have allocations on time and when their Laws shall have been reviewed they would have the power to reach to these tertiary institutions. In our summon to the various institutions Mr Chairman, we even told some of these institutions that, these fees that they pay to the Tertiary Commission be paid so that they will do their jobs adequately for the people of this country. On that note this is what I have for this particular group submission. I thank you very much.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, I want to narrow down the recommendation of the Chairperson to withhold the allocation of the Chief Medical Officer. Mr Chairman, I know the important of this office to the State and when we created that office it was not just for legal proceedings but also to go to Court and testify very important State matters. Over the time, it has also been a procedure wherein we see MDAs dodging parliamentary proceedings when it comes to their budgets. No matter the excuse given I am sure that kind of respectability of this House is hinged on this decision taken by the Committee and I think as a Parliament we need to support that Committee until we have the MDA to come before Parliament to answer

the question of why they were not here and for other Committees that have such consideration with MDAs not to cover them up because when you do, you are also encouraging other MDAs to absent themselves from a very important national proceedings.

Mr Chairman, let me go to the Government Printing Department although the Chairperson says what has been allocated to them is enough but I want to draw your attention Mr Chairman, Honourable Members, if you look at the money we are spending as a country in importing text books in to this country, I am sure if we empower the Government Printing Department we can do better than that and we can curtail the foreign exchange that is going out of this country. We have the machineries, our personnel have been trained by the Ghanaian experts who came to Sierra Leone and therefore all we need to do for the Government Printing is to allocate more resources to them and have a moratorium to say all Government Agencies dealing with printing even if it costs printing a paper for any operation of Government should be done by the Government Printers that would save us a huge amount of money being spent. We even go to Ghana to print ordinary receipts and other documents for Government why we cannot do it here when we have all the equipment? In fact when you go to Government Printing 70% of the building is still not occupied so we have the space. We just do not talk about giving allocations always to keep the institution running but institution of that nature that has the tendency to increase our revenue base and reduce our use of foreign exchange to other countries must be encouraged to not just survive but also excel in their productions. For me I think we need to review this and as a Ministry I have no doubt in the Minister in making regulations when it comes to saving this country huge amount of money, I think this is one area we have to look at. To Mr Minister, please find time to go to Government Printing we have all the machines we need there to do Government printing. We have trained personnel there now because it is almost ten years when Ghanaians were here training them so we can make use of that. Even our text books we print for our primary kids are being printed

outside Sierra Leone and we pay huge amount of money if we can localize that I am sure that will save our nation a huge amount of money.

Mr Chairman, Tertiary Education Commission Vote 300-03 the allocation given to them they have a huge task. This is the institution that reviews curriculum of our tertiary institutions. They are the people who benchmarked institutions in Sierra Leone even staffing capacity therefore they regulate and also benchmark for best practices. It means they have to involve in many travels throughout the year and therefore if it is so when we give some of these allocations let us also look at the roles the institution will be playing and when we allocate resources to such institutions is not just the allocations but also let the money be given to them because if you fail in that you also have poor production of good man power. We have many mushroom institutions in Sierra Leone and the TEC will tell you we cannot go all over the country because we do not have allocation on time and we do not have the required allocation.

Mr Chairman, the Public Service Commission yesterday again we talked about the Civil Service Training College unfortunately by the time we round up that section I had to go for a family affair which was also very important to me but these are institutions we must up keep for the smooth running of our country. We have the political will to achieve the result our people want but we depend on people. Politicians have dreams and aspirations but the actual people who transcend our thoughts, our dreams, and our aspirations to reality are those Public Servants therefore institutions that superintend over their activities must be treated seriously. Thank you very much Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Before I give the Floor to Honourable Kellie let me make this clarification and for the attention of all Members of Parliament particularly Chairmen of Committees it was legislated by this House in the Finance Act of 2019 Section [39] to be specific that all Ministries, Departments and Agencies, State owned enterprises, State owned banks, National Social Security and Insurance Trust shall use the Government Printer for the printing of all their programs and all of their printing materials so if we are not enforcing it as a Parliament it behooves us to be reminded

that when we legislate we must keep the legislations in mind and when we legislate this is the very reason why popularization of Bill is very important. So it is important that we note some of these important legislations and let them also understand that it is their right as the Ministry of Finance has given them sufficient power. It is now in the hands of them and the Members of Parliament that are performing oversight on these Agencies to ensure that we ask them and we look at the list of procurement activities that they have, those that have to do with printing if it was not done by the Government Printer we penalize them. That is just what I wanted to add Honourable Kellie you have the Floor.

HON. TAMBA KELLIE: Thank you Mr Chairman. Mr Chairman, my own is just a general comment and I would like to start with Section [92] Sub-Section [3] of the Constitution this is very important. I read: "It shall be the duty of any such Committee as referred to Sub-Section [2] to investigate or enquire the activities or administration of such Ministries or Departments as may be assigned to it and such investigation or enquiry may extend to proposals for legislation." Mr Chairman, we have never had a Report or have we actually given thought to a situation where an entity created is duplicating their functions performed by another existing entity and then we want the Executive to fund all of those and most of these entities are created by legislation passed in this House. So rather than paste the Executive and the Minister of Finance on a coals of dilemma let us ask ourselves this question some of these entities are they really adding any value to the administration of this country? The answer is no is just a duplication of functions, and multiplication of entities. The entities complained about inadequate funding, yet we identify huge leakages in the allocations made to them so if we have not played our part to ensure that those leakages are addressed, monies that are stolen are returned we are not doing justice to the Executive particularly to the Ministry of Finance because when these allocations are made the point of our scrutiny is to ensure that they are properly spent but when that function is performed perfunctorily there is nothing the Executive can do.

Mr Chairman, the necessity of some of these MDAs let us look at their terms of reference and where there is duplication we can do by legislation some of these entities should be examined so that all these questions about inadequacy of funding will be addressed. Secondly, I have been going through the Auditor General's Report and just browsing through it I see huge leakages identified and if entities allocated with monies are not properly spending those monies then it is our duty to make sure that they account for them. It is not good telling the Minister of Finance to increase allocations of MDAs when we are not in the position or ready to pluck the leakages. I thank you Mr Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you Honourable Member. Mr Minister you will respond to the few concerns and suggestions but before I give you the Floor I would want to say Madam Chair in your Report you said some MDAs but in the end we have only one MDA just the Chief Medical Examiner I think you should take note of that. Finally, to Honourable Kellie what we should do as Parliament maybe at the end of this exercise is to come together and make recommendations to the President because he has the sole prerogative in Section [61] to constitute offices so we can recommend those offices that we consider for manger and those that we think are not adding any value in to the general governance infrastructure.

MR SHEKU AHMED FANTAMADI BANGURA: Thank you Mr Chairman. I only took note as far as the areas of advisory but I want to support the whole issue of the Chief Medical Examiner to actually appear before the Committee and respond to all questions regarding resources that we allocated to them, until they do so even when we pass this Bill we will withhold disbursement to them. I think they should be summoned to Parliament to come and respond. I heard you on Government Printer I have been there severally and I work with them. I think they are working on a program to support them to be able to enhance the capacity because there is a huge opportunity that rests in that entity, I think they should take advantage of it. I hear you on the issue of addressing backlog on Granting Aid to the universities that is the discussion we are having with the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education and the respective entities

and we are addressing them very strategically over time. All others I think are basically advising on how we can enhance the capacity of these entities that we have considered by the Committee.

On that note Mr Chairman, I move that the following Votes Heads stand part of the schedule:

300-01 Ministry of Technical and Higher Education **Le 47,337,100**

300-03 Tertiary Education Commission **Le 6,789,800**

311-01 Health Service Commission **Le 6,526,500**

123-01 Public Service Commission **Le 4,210,700**

141-01 Government Printing Department **Le 4,073,900**

146-01 Ministry of Western Region **Le 2,963, 300**

214-01 National Cyber Security Coordination Center **Le 3,631,600**

215-01 Office of the Chief Medical Examiner **Le 679,000**

420-01 Sierra Leone Environmental Protection Agency **Le 100,786,300**

304-01 Ministry of Health and Sanitation **Le 131,692,700**

305-02 National Commission for Persons with Disability **Le 3,168,600**

323-01 National Public Health Agency **Le 9,000,000**

346-01 Allied Health Professional Council **Le 500,000**

107-01 Bonthe District Council **Le 10,476,968**

107-01 Karene District Council **Le 10,904,657**

THE CHAIRMAN: Honourable Members, the question is that the Votes as read out by the Minister the same for the Chief Medical Examiner's Office whose Vote is going to be withheld stand part of the schedule.

[Question Proposed Put and Agree to]

[The following Votes as announced by the Minister as amended form part of the schedule]

THE CHAIRMAN: I think I am willing to take one more Report but unfortunately the Minister has an appointment with the highest office at around 1 O'clock and I do expect him to go there at 1 P.M. and they have just signaled to me that he would want us to round up and besides the fact that the Minister has an appointment I would also want to state that, it is disappointing that Members of Parliament were well seated this morning for the Save Motherhood Bill and immediately after the Bill was dispensed to the Legislative Committee the House is almost 70% empty that is not a good show for us because it seems as if we are responding only to issues of concern to us. It is of concern that the most important issue whether the Save Motherhood Bill passes in to Law or not the most important issue is the Budget. A Government without money is nothing and besides if we do not understand the amount given to the MDAs how they are utilized it is of no essence why we are here. I implore Members to be present tomorrow in the morning so that we will finish this Budget exercise. Do we have any announcement? Mr Minister you are relieved.

[THE HOUSE RESUMED]

HON. MUSTAPHA MUSA SELLU: Mr Speaker, we have 12 Reports and we have dealt with 5 we still have up to 7 to go so I want you to use your good office to talk to the IT Department so that they can upload all the Reports on our tablets so that we get the Report latest tomorrow because we should be following as the Chairmen are reading the Reports but most of the Reports have not been uploaded up till now.

THE SPEAKER: I understand for those of us that did elementary IT there is a word called G-I-G-O what you put in is what comes out. If the Clerks of the Committees do not supply the Reports to the IT Department there is no way they can upload it from the air. What I would ask is the Sub-Committee that is responsible for reviewing the Reports from the Clerks should hasten the review of the Reports and make sure that they make all those copies that they have concluded available to the IT Department so the IT Department can upload it and we can have some printouts to be given to Leaders so that the process can be expedited.

HON. AMBROSE MAADA LEBBY: Mr Speaker, I want to confirm that both soft copies and hard copies have been submitted to the Legislative Department so I am not sure of what are the reasons for the delay.

THE SPEAKER: You mean IT?

HON. AMBROSE MAADA LEBBY: Yes Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Legislative Committee, they are putting on a defence.

HON. AMBROSE MAADA LEBBY: I can confirm that Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, again in the absence of the substantive Minister I want to believe there are two Deputies and we have a lot of other Reports to be read in this House so can we kindly request that the Deputy Minister 1 or 2 to come to the House and then we proceed with the proceedings.

THE SPEAKER: I have heard you let me hear from the Chairman of Finance.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: The two Deputies are not around that is the excuse given by the Minister.

THE SPEAKER: Is not an excuse I know that the Deputy Minister 1 is in Abuja.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Very well, even the other one we asked him he said he is not around so he is the only Minister available for now.

THE SPEAKER: I do not know of the Deputy Minister 2, he may not be around but I am very sure the Deputy Minister 1 is in Abuja.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Both of them are absent so for the Reports the Director of Committee will be working assiduously to ensure that the Reports are ready of course they have challenges too but we will make sure that almost all the Reports will be available by tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: And for the record we have only taken four Reports now.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: I agreed with you Sir. Can I please take S.O. 23 Sir?

THE SPEAKER: Very well Sir.

HON. FRANCIS AMARA KAISAMBA: Mr Speaker, the other day I mentioned the rate of accidents in this country and particularly so because of stationary vehicles. The Speaker did convey a meeting and the Road Safety Authority did not even appear in that meeting. I want to state again that the rates of fatalities from these accidents caused by stationary vehicles are becoming very alarming and definite actions should be taken. On the death of the popular legendary musician for example Steady Bongo there are various versions but the one we know is that they were on a motor bike and the bike ran in to a stationary vehicle and of course he died. In Kenema somewhere around Hangha Road two school kids were on a bike and I think their father was riding the bike and they equally ran in to a stationary vehicle and three of them died and these are happening across the entire country. This is a very serious matter and I want to urge that we invite the Road Safety Authority to appear before Parliament and to begin to take actions if you have a break down for example you can be there for not less than 24 hours, otherwise the Road Safety Authority should have the man power to tow those vehicles to locations where the vehicle owners will bear the cost but they will be there permanently and they are causing serious harm to the community and the country as a whole. I want you to use your office so that the Road Safety Authority the

institution that is responsible for road safety in this country be summoned so that necessary action will be taken. I thank you.

HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA: Mr Speaker, in as much as I accept what my senior Colleague is saying but Mr Speaker let me draw your attention also to a very serious issue and as representatives of the people we must not keep quiet in the current situation in Guinea affecting Sierra Leoneans and the current position we are seeing on social media which I believe is not the Government position in Sierras Leone but chasing people in Sierra Leone must not be done discriminately and we have people who seem to be having tribes similar to those in Guinea but that do not make them Guineans. I think in such a given circumstance like this I want to move through your office that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs brings up very serious measures for the safety of our citizens in Guinea and also to have a better diplomatic solution to the problem rather than cascading it down to what we saw on social media. I do not believe what is on social media is true but if it is anything to go by that is not good for our bilateral ties with Guinea and I think as an elected Government for that matter we have more we can do bilaterally rather than taken these steps that we saw all over the country. I am an MP from Kambia District and every day in the border line from Kambia District we received Sierra Leoneans coming in and we are almost having a displaced camp there for our people. So I also call on the Office of the National Security to be alerted with security issues around that border area for other possible crime rates because there are people who they are bringing in now who are not Sierra Leoneans but because they are not also Guineans they ferry them back to Sierra Leone and that is a serious security call for concern so we are asking that Government steps in fast to mediate the situation so it will not go out of hands. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I want to thank the two Members for raising concerns that are sensitive. Firstly, with the issue of deportation, returning and exchanging and allegation of people being detained in Sierra Leone I think it was addressed this morning on 98.1 FM the Office of National Security, the Sierra Leone Police and the Immigration Department are responsible for controlling and managing the borders were on 98.1

Radio and they explained exactly what the intention of Government is and what steps Government has taken to remedy the situation. I believe we have a Government and the Government is working on it. Guinea is not only a neighbour, they are our bilateral partners. We have supported each other over difficult times and I am sure this will not be an exception. It will be resolved and everything will go back to normal. It is obvious that when nations are closed it happens almost every year between Nigeria and Cameroun, and between Nigeria and Benin. When once you are closed and you have common ties with languages, with culture and tradition, you will most times clash with few misunderstanding but it would be resolved amicably.

Honourable Members, with regards stationary vehicle I believe a lot of sensitization has to be done particularly with drivers because even those of us that drive private vehicles we cannot identify traffic signs. We do not understand where lay-bys are, because when your vehicle encounters challenges on the road you can move them to certain distance and if you look at most of the stationary vehicles you would realize that they are not too far from lay-bys but because they do not understand where lay-bys are located and what to do with lay-bys they would end up stationing the vehicle right in the middle of the road and instead of having triangles or reflectors around their vehicles as prescribed by the traffic rule they will uproot grasses and they would scatter them in the tarmac. And after they would have removed their vehicles from the road they would not remove the grasses and the debris that they would have put on the road. All of that is inimical to the sustainability and reliability of the road and it creates false alarm because if you are driving you see a sign that there is a stationary vehicle in front of you or broken down you would slow down. So I would urge all of you to be patient until the Committees are announced so that this matter will be referred to the appropriate constituted Committee and it would be looked in to accordingly and when once the Committees are announced not only to come and have a talk shop but to follow up and take punitive measures. It means you should conduct oversight across the country and locate by registration plate; a stationary vehicle that you would find

and at the time publish it so that the Authority would know that what they are doing is not in accordance with their prescribed responsibility. I thank you Honourable Members.

ADJOURNMENT

MR SPEAKER ADJOURNED THE HOUSE TO WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2024

AT 10:00 A.M.

THE HOUSE ROSE AT 2:35 P.M.