

*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

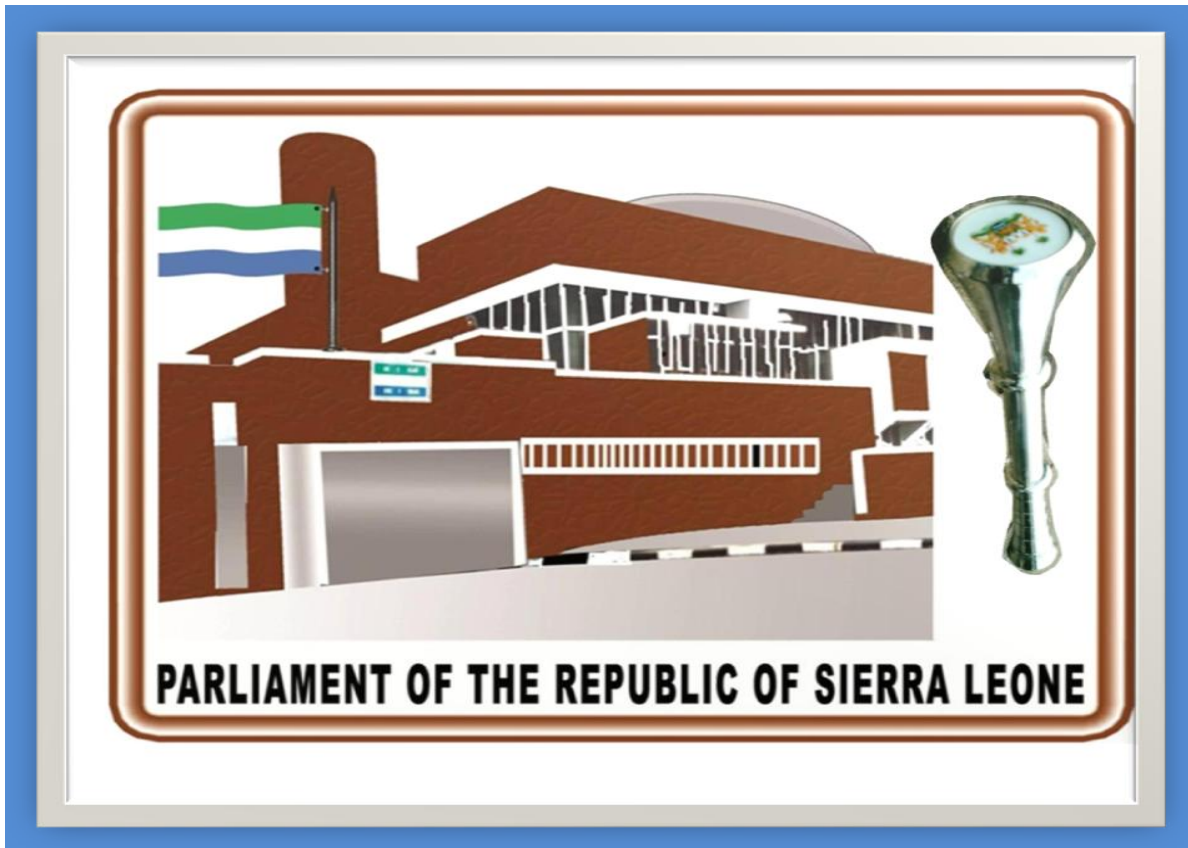
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**OFFICIAL HANSARD REPORT**

**SECOND SESSION –FIRST MEETING**

**THURSDAY, 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2024**

*SESSION – 2023/2024*



*OAU DRIVE, TOWER HILL, FREETOWN*

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**[HANSARD]**

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**VOLUME: I**

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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 Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024

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

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

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

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**Thursday, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2024.**

#### **I. PRAYERS**

*[The Table Clerk, Mrs Bintu Weston, Read the Prayers]*

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

*[The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ibrahim Tawa Conteh, in the Chair]*

The House was called to Order

## **II. CORRECTION OF VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY SITTING HELD ON TUESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER, 2024**

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we go through the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024. As usual, we shall skip pages 1 to 4 and start with Page 5. Do you have any correction to make on Page 5? Page 6? Page 7? Page 8? Page 9? Page 10? If there is no amendment or correction, can someone move for the adoption of the record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 as presented?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. JOSEPH A. BASH KAMARA:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[Record of Votes and Proceedings for the parliamentary sitting held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 has been adopted as presented]*

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, I would want to amend the Order Paper before you make the announcement. I move that we expunge item IV, which has to do with 'Laying of Paper by the Attorney General and Minister of Justice. Thus, item V now becomes item IV and item VI becomes item V.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** I so second, Mr Speaker.

*[The Motion to amend the Order Paper has been carried]*

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

**THE SPEAKER:** I have some announcements to make. The first announcement is a sad announcement while the other announcement is a procedural announcement. The sad announcement has to do with the passing away of one of our colleagues in the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament, Honourable Barba Kamara. Let us observe a moment of silence, but in this instance, I would want us to celebrate the life of our colleague by applauding him in our own way. May his soul rest in perfect peace and may the light perpetual shines on him?

The next announcement is to inform the Leader of Government Business to do the needful relating to S.O 5[1], which deals with the debates on the Presidential Address. The final announcement relates to Members of Parliament, particularly those on my left and my very self, me being the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee that I am aware of the document before us and the provision in Sub-section 10 of the 1991 Constitution, Act No. 6 regarding the Auditor General; and in due course, the House will

decide as provided for by the Constitution. I want to encourage all Honourable Members to do the needful regarding whatever that has been done to be in line with the spirit and intent of the Constitution. Therefore, Honourable Members from either side of the aisles should continue to exercise patience and I want to assure you that it will appear on the Order Paper and then the House will decide the next line of action. I thank you very much.

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

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service that is charged with the responsibility of vetting presidential nominees to serve in public offices of state, met on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 and interviewed nine presidential nominees for the following appointments to public offices:

1. One Board Chairman;
2. One Deputy Chairman; and
3. Seven Board Members.

##### *2. Procedure*

The Committee conducted its open hearings within the usual framework of procedures. The nominees were vetted on issues pertaining to their educational backgrounds to ensure that they had the required proven track records in pertinent work situations for appointments in such important offices of State. Further probing questions put to the appointees covered wide ranging issues relating to declared assets, tax obligations and their visions for a productive tenure. Issues of unsuitability or otherwise were also closely looked into by the Committee.

##### **3. Second sitting of the Committee on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, 2024**

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, in recent times, several reforms have been instituted by the government of Sierra Leone to provide public institutions with standards to maximise output. The Consumer Protection Act, 2020 [No. 7 of 2020] and the National Revenue Authority Act, 2022 were enacted by this House of Parliament are amongst the many reforms aimed at providing policy guidelines and oversight for these institutions.

In fulfilment of the above, therefore, the Committee interviewed the following Presidential nominees on oath:

*i. Mr Gibril Saccoh, proposed Chairman, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Saccoh is a certified Chartered Accountant, Investment Policy Expert and Financial Advisor. He is a holder of the prestigious Association of Chartered Certified Accountant Certificate and a Master's degree holder in Business Administration degree all from the United Kingdom. In addition to these the nominee also holds several certificates in Leadership and entrepreneurship to his credit.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Saccoh is currently serving as a Private Business Consultant and Financial Advisor that provides corporate financial analysis, auditing, risk and quality management to major corporations, public and private enterprises.

In his response on addressing the numerous problems associated with sub-standard products and goods that have proliferated the market, the nominee said: **"The National Consumer Protection Act clearly spells out the punishments, penalties and fines the law imposes for selling fake or substandard products. In order to make these laws potent we must have strong institutions such as the police, the justice system to enforce compliance and adherence."**

Mr Saccoh promised the Committee that if approved by the House of Parliament, he would provide the needed guidance to management to facilitate the prosecution of perpetrators to break chain of impunity.

*ii. Chief Mathew Young JP, proposed Deputy Chairman, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Chief Mathew Young JP, is the longest serving Mende tribal head in the Western Area who has served in that position for over twenty-five years. Chief Young is reputed to have successfully mediated several inter-tribal squabbles. Chief Mathew Young was appointed Justice of the Peace by Former President Kabbah in 1999 in recognition of his role maintaining tranquility amongst the various ethnic groups in the Western Area. He started as a nurse in 1992 at the Newham General Hospital, United Kingdom and later built up his political career due to his distinguished leadership qualities and reputations admired by many Sierra Leoneans.

The Nominee assured the Committee that he would work closely with the Chairman and other Members of the Board to draw on his wealth of experience as tribal head to advise on holding consultative engagements with all stakeholders to develop a national strategy to cut the chain of the proliferation of fake and sub-standards goods flooding in the market.



*iii. Dr John Arouna Karimu, proposed Member, National Revenue Authority Board*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Dr John Arouna Karimu is a hybrid economist and tax expert. He is reputed to have sound ability and an excellent track record in institutional building and reforms with particular reference to tax administration, institutional reforms and modernisation. Additionally, Dr Karimu has an excellent knowledge and experience in governance and management of state institutions with particular reference to providing leadership and strategic direction. A clear attestation and testament to this credit is that Dr John Karimu pioneered the establishment of the National Revenue Authority under the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and also served as its first Commissioner General of the NRA, the institution that is now the engine of our economic growth. Dr Karimu graduated with a first class honours in Geography from the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone and went on to obtain his Doctor of Philosophy economics at the esteemed University of London in September 1981. Prior to his nomination, Dr Karimu served as Public Financial Management Advisor at the Ministry of Finance, Government of Sierra Leone providing support and advice on public financial management issues to the Ministry of Finance.

Commenting on his roles as a tax expert of the National Revenue Authority Board Dr John Karimu said **"As a tax expert on the Board, my roles will be to advise the Chairman and the Board in the area of tax legislation and obligations from tax payers. I will be also proffering advice to the management of the NRA to help them navigate the complex world of taxation to ensure compliance with the applicable laws and regulations. Additionally, I will assist the Authority with tax preparation, tax planning, auditing and calculating taxes for diverse public investment portfolios."**

*iv. Madam Memunatu Bernardette Rogers, Member, National Revenue Authority Board*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Madam Memunatu Rogers is an acclaimed Legal Practitioner with in-depth knowledge in tax regimes and laws, leadership, administrative management, public relations, litigation, mediation and arbitration. Madam Rogers graduated with a First Class in Bachelor of Laws from the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, and was called to the bar in 2018. She is currently serving as legal practitioner and partner at the Brewah & CO, Mahiteh Chamber at 24 Pa Demba Road. Commenting on her role on the Board as the Legal Practitioner, she said: **"My main responsibilities include providing the National Revenue Authority with the guidance on interpreting laws relating to taxation. I will be representing**

**the Authority in all litigation and law suits relating to matters to fulfill the Authority's Vision and Mission."**

v. *Mr Andrew Bangalie-Pessima, proposed Member, National Revenue Authority Board*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Andrew Bangalie Pessima is Development and Planning Specialist with wealth of experience in town and urban planning. His key deliverables include conducting research, analysing data, developing plans, consulting with stakeholders, overseeing and addressing issues on urban planning. Mr Pessima graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Economics from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in 1978 with emphasis in Economic Development and Planning. He then proceeded to the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, where he studied Urban and Regional Planning and graduated with a Master of Philosophy in 1987. Prior to this appointment, he served as a Board Member of the National Civil Registration Authority, where his key role among others was to control, supervise and provide policy guidelines to the institution as provided for by the NCRA Act, 2016.

The Nominee was admonished by the Committee to monitor the operations of the consumer markets in Sierra Leone and consider how they would improve for the long term interest of the consumer.

vi. *Mr Mahmoud Ruskin Kabbah, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone*

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Kabbah is a Project Management Specialist with a strong background in Peace and Development Studies. He possesses strong interpersonal character, coupled with excellent communication and presentation skills. Mr Kabbah holds a Master of Arts in Peace and Development Studies from Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in May 2015 and a Diploma in Project Management. From October 2019 to present, Mr Kabbah served as Executive Director of the Consumer Protection Council of Sierra Leone, responsible to provide technical oversight, strategic direction and performing quality assurance and ensuring that the organisation runs efficiently. Responding to probing questions on the value he would add to the Commission, he said: "As a Member of the previous Council, I will be providing an in depth analysis on the policies, research, and information to move the Commission forward."

vii. Ms Koloneh Sankoh, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone

Mr Speaker, Honourable Ms Koloneh Sankoh is an Administrator and Public Relations professional and is well grounded in project management and strategic communications. Ms Koloneh Sankoh holds a Master degree in Governance and Leadership from the Institute of Public Administration and Management, a constituent college of the University of Sierra Leone and also holds several professional and short term courses to her credit. From September 2018 to April 2020, Ms Koloneh Sankoh served as Director of Administration responsible to effectively plan, direct, monitor and control administrative activities of the Anti-Corruption Commission. Additionally, she was responsible to plan, direct and coordinate the procurement, logistics and fleet management functions of the Commission.

The Nominee was praised across the aisles for her diligent and meritorious service in the Public Service. She was further advised to encourage the Chairman and other Board Members to form a synergy with other Statutory Regulatory bodies to build a robust strategy to ensure that the concerns of the public relating to standards are upheld.

viii. Mr Francis Gbondo, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Mr Francis Gbondo is a household name in the political realms of Kono District, having served the Sierra Leone People's Party for more than two decades in various capacities, including Constituency Secretary and as an aspirant Member of Parliament. He has also served as Regent Paramount Chief for Lei Chiefdom. Responding to probing questions on the value he would add to the Board, Mr Gbondo opined that: **"With the approval of the Board, I will help to provide the guidance to suppliers and other interested persons to function in accordance with the policy details of the Board."**

ix. Madam Susan Williams, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, Madam Susan Williams has been a consumer activist for over ten years and has served with great passion to protect the welfare of Sierra Leoneans. She has also served as Commissioner for the Local Government Commission, where she contributed immensely to ensuring that government programmes and priorities were effectively implemented at local level. In her response to Members' concerns over the increase of substandard products in the market for consumers, Madam Susan Williams said: **"As a Board, we will use our tools to provide strong**

**policy guidelines for the management to enforce compliance and prosecution of defaulters. We will also advise the government to provide the needed resources for the Commission to execute its mandate.”**

#### 4. Recommendations

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

- i. Mr Gibril Saccoh, proposed Chairman, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone;
- ii. Chief Mathew Younge, Deputy Chairman, National Consumer Protection Commission of Sierra Leone;
- iii. Mr Andrew Pessima, proposed Member, National Revenue Authority Board;
- iv. Madam Memunatu Rogers, proposed Member, National Revenue Authority Board;
- v. Dr John Arouna Karimu, proposed Member, National Revenue Authority Board;
- vi. Mr Mamoud Ruskin Kabbah, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone;
- vii. Madam Koloneh Sankoh, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone;
- viii. Mr Francis Gbondo, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone; and
- ix. Madam Susan Williams, proposed Member, National Consumer Protection Commission Sierra Leone

#### 5. Conclusion

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Second Report reflects the unanimous view of the Committee. I therefore move that the Second Report of the Second Session of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and that the recommendations contained therein be approved.

Honourable Bashiru Silikie

Deputy Chairman 1 and Leader of Government Business

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. AARON A. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We have very fine nominees before us this morning. Unlike the usual practice wherein MPs will lavish

praises on nominees or disclose their qualifications, I will be a little bit different today because I know that they have been nominated to serve in various offices. The President must have thought about their qualifications before they were nominated; he must have thought about their capacities and willingness to serve. Therefore, I am not here to bore this Honourable House with their qualifications. However, I want to draw their attention to critical issues, especially those that affect the people we are representing. I am sure all of us know that we are living in a country where consumers are not protected. As MPs, we have done our bit regarding the promulgation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2020. This is a tap on MPs that they are responsive or cognizance of the sufferings and pains our people are going through. The Act in question was well written, but how many of our constituents know about its existence? If you look at the Act, the responsibility to popularise the Act lies on the Consumer Protection Agency. Their focus could be how much salaries they receive and how they actually execute their responsibilities as stipulated in the Act. That has been a challenge and that is why I want to call on you to go to this Agency and do the needful. Please note that Sierra Leoneans are suffering because of the silence of this Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, people are buying mobile data, but there is no network. We are also experiencing drop calls on a daily basis. Again, people subscribe their EDSA meters, but there is no electricity. Sometimes even the subscription we make contributes to the destruction of our homes. Many appliances have gone due to bad light. We want you to be more responsive with your responsibilities. A friend in Makeni told me that there was no orange network in Makeni and she had to switch to Q'cell. The same issue was reported in Kambia and even at Mile 91. You would agree with me that poor network is the order of the day and nobody is saying anything about it. I am sure it is the responsibility of NaTCA to regulate them, but you have to make sure that you mobilise the citizens. The agencies should also protect the costumers and not only protecting the interest of the government. However, if you provide leadership, you will be able to galvanise customers and organise a peaceful protest. This will ensure that our voices are heard to these service providers. If I pay for a service, I need to benefit from what I have paid for. This has been a serious issue affecting the people of this country. We have expired goods in our shops and nobody is saying anything. Those expired goods are not supposed to be in the shelves of the shops at all. We have expired goods in the shops and they are being sold to consumers. This is because they do not know about the existence of the Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, price discrimination is also the order of the day. Sometimes goods are sold to consumers based on their appearances or economic status. In order words, one's appearance or status in society determines how much you are going to be charged. If I went to a shop as a Member of Parliament, a bag of rice

that should be sold at **NLe800** will now be sold to me at a cost of **NLe1,200**. This is happening because we do not have an effective Consumer Protection Agency. If you go to other countries, you will observe that every commodity, whether it is in the shop or on the street, is being labelled or price tagged. The price is tagged and straight off you would know the cost without asking. Therefore, there is no way you can be discriminated based on your status or your personality. If you go to Peterson Zochonis, commonly called PZ to buy a mobile phone charger, something that should be sold at **NLe20** will cost you **NLe50**. This again depends on your negotiating power. As MPs, we have done our best and the onus is now on you as an Agency to ensure that you educate the citizens on their rights and make sure that you popularise this Act. We want the people to know what this Parliament has done for them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have done so much for the NRA. When you look at the NRA Act, 2022, it gave enormous powers to the Board and one of the key responsibilities is setting revenue targets. We know that the President has made a commitment to NRA. If I could remember that his first statement in this Well was to raise revenue up to **20%** of the GDP. Today, we are still struggling to collect **12%**. This means we are below the target after seven years. We have the new Finance Act that introduces more taxes on our people; sometimes we even double tax them, but we are not seeing improvements in revenue mobilisation. We double tax our people, but we are not meeting revenue targets. We want to see the NRA exceeds the revenue targets they set annually. The NRA Board has a role to play because their responsibility is not only limited to overseeing the Authority, but they should also ensure that those policies are followed to the letter.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, NRA and the Board should introduce new innovations, such as imposing taxes on mobile money transfers. This will be an opportunity and it has no cost on the citizens. I am sure for every transaction you do, they will charge you **NLe4** per every **NLe1,000**. However, you and I know that when you do a transaction using the electronic means, whether orange money or Afrimoney, you will be required to pay **NLe30** for every **NLe1,000** you transfer. That is too exorbitant, but we have accepted it. The government should also benefit through the introduction of alternate tax. The government should, at least, receive **20%** of the **NLe30**. Those moneys could be used to provide social services and not to continue to add more taxes on rice importation, which is a basic commodity all of us depend on. I have confidence in the new Chairman of the NRA. They usually say that 'to whom much is given, much is expected.' When you were here for approval, many praises were lavished on you and that happened for a reason. We expect that when you go to that institution, you will do justice for the people of this country and the President of Sierra Leone. The President has once said that his aim was to generate **20%** revenue of our

GDP. Today, we are still below **12%**. We are calling on you to introduce policies that are tax friendly or motivate customers and businesses to pay and not to continue to double taxes on rice and other commodities.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, compliance is another area I want to throw light on. I remembered during the Public Accounts Committee hearings, we realised that there are huge **arrears** in the books of the NRA. I am sure taxes are non-negotiable. Taxes should not be negotiated; they should be seen as fixed. If the NRA Act says a particular taxpayer should pay **NLe2** at the end of year, you have to make sure that he or she pays. It is the law and we have to follow the law. There are, however, huge arrears in the books of NRA. Therefore, I want the Board members, if approved by this House, should continue to raise the bar of NRA. We believe in the leadership of NRA. We have women who are now Executive Chairpersons and the Commissioner General is a woman. The Deputy Commissioner General is also a woman and we know what women can do; we know the ability women possess. If you have men to give them the necessary support, they will exploit that opportunity. Mr Chairman and Commissioners, when you go to the NRA, please give the requisite support to these women, so that they can raise the required revenue to support government. I thank you very much and I want to call on colleagues to speedily consider the approval of these fine nominees.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Leader of the Opposition. The only thing I would want to expunge from the records is that women do not need abled men to succeed. They are already designed as success machines and therefore they succeed at all times. This is what I would like to expunge from the records. I want to add something as well. The Leader spoke about price differentials. I would tell you with confidence that in this Parliament, we enquired for a close user group network from Africell and Orange. It will surprise Members to note that Africell charges **NLe17** for close user group network to connect staffers of Parliament. They offered to connect Members of Parliament for free. Orange SL Ltd, on the other hand, was charging us **NLe50** for the same service. We tried to negotiate to the point that they would only provide the service to us at **NLe34**, which is twice what Africell is charging.

Similarly, Honourable Members, when it comes to transfer Commission, I think it is something we should look at as a Parliament. I would want to make a pronouncement that the leadership of either side constitutes a Committee to summon Orange here. They should come and tell us exactly why there are price differentials for the same service. I would want your approval. We have agreed to set up a six-man Committee to look into the issue. The Committee will comprise the Deputy Leader 1 of Government Business, the Chairman of the Committee on Communications, a representative from the PC MPs, Deputy Leader 1 of the Opposition, Honourable Nenneh Lebbie.

*[The Motion to constitute a Committee to summon Orange SL Ltd regarding price differentials has been carried]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Let the Committee goes to work immediately.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to toe the line of Honourable Aaron A. Koroma, but let me just deviate a bit before I come there. I want to talk about a very beautiful lady among the nominees, whose name is Memunatu Rogers, my own younger sister. The lady is not only carefully educated, but she is very hard working.

**THE SPEAKER:** Nowadays, they usually you must be dangerously educated. I do not know if the Honourable Osman A. Timbo is dangerously educated.

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Those who are dangerously educated are from a particular set of group and if you look at the alignment, it starts from this end to the Honourable Osman A. Timbo. I will look out for the connection.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, of course this Parliament has conducted itself without hindrance to our work and we have been very professional. I am sure part of our professional practice includes recusing yourself from a debate that you think will spark conflict of interest. Honestly, we do not know the nexus between you and the nominee, but you have clearly informed this House that she is your younger sister and for that reason, you should recuse yourself from this debate. The other Members of Parliament will do the needful. We do not want to think that you are lavishing praises on the nominee due to your biological affiliation or connection.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I think that only applies to interviews and not plenary approvals. I think that was why I recused myself from the interviews. I was not part of the interview when she came. I have the right to talk about her in this debate, otherwise we should not debate government Motions because we are sitting on a Government Bench. I am very mindful of it, Mr Speaker. I was not present during her interview because I knew she is my sister. I am sure I am supposed to speak now.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, this will set a bad precedent. Of course she is your sister and you should be excluded from saying something about her. If my brother comes here for approval, I will not even sit here while they are doing the debate.

**THE SPEAKER:** Mr Leader of the Opposition, I have listened to both sides.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, the Honourable Dickson Momoh Rogers was part of the interview, but when it came to the individual in question, he took leave of us. This is now the plenary he is here to tell us in detailed about what he knows about



the nominee. He is not influencing anybody's opinion or decision. Just like all nominees who have gone through parliamentary approval, we could have had special interests and that was why we were showering praises on those nominees. The Honourable Member could have even said Madam Rogers is Mrs Rogers by marriage and nobody will question him. He is bold enough to tell us that the nominee is her younger sister and because of that maybe you do not know if he is going to tell us something different from what we already know about her.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, what I will assure you is that the Chief Whip of this Parliament has always been praising nominees who are related to other Members of Parliament in the Well. Therefore, they have to pay him back. I want to state here that the approval process for nominees in Parliament begins at the Committee level; and once he recused himself at that level, it means he did not want to influence the process. I am saying that if he has recused himself at the interview level, why not doing the same at this level? We Members of Parliament have to ensure that wherever we have vested interest, we have to recuse ourselves from the process and allow others who do not have vested interests to do the needful. A lot of Members are ready to do what he is planning to do.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** In that vein, I will advise the Chief Whip to contribute to this debate, but not on the NRA candidate.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have a ruling to make, Honourable Members. I think my ruling is very simple and will be based on precedent. The precedent before this House is that I have been in this House in the 5<sup>th</sup> Parliament and when the Honourable Whip of the Opposition was agitated to talk about his uncle who was a nominee from Kambia District, the then Speaker of the House, Honourable Chernor Abass Bundu was forced to give him the Floor, so that he will talk about his uncle. I see every reason why I should allow the Honourable Dickson Momoh Rogers to talk about his sister and that is my ruling.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, I give every respect to your ruling sir. In fact, nobody questions your ruling, but remember that Sierra Leone is a village. I am sure once the Honourable Member comes from Kambia, whosoever comes from Kambia is his uncle. He did call all the nominees from Kambia his uncles.

**THE SPEAKER:** All Rogers from Pujehun are families.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** This is his biological sister.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, indeed I will not deny my own biological sister because of interview. I will stop here for now.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, you have referenced me and I need to clear the air. I am Honourable Abdul Karim Kamara, but Honourable Manso Dumbuya is my uncle by political lineage in Kambia. This one is Rogers and the other is also Rogers. They are both Rogers and from the same village, the same mother. I am from Masomgbala and Honourable Manso Dumbuya is from Tonko Limba.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have ruled and S.O 52 is final. Honourable Dickson M. Rogers, you have the latitude to talk about Ms Rogers.

**HON. DICKSON M. ROGERS:** Mr Speaker, I am sure there are other Honourable Members who will talk for/about my sister the same way I would have spoken. I therefore want to step aside or recuse myself from this debate. However, we have four more years to go and we will definitely come back for another twenty years and I want this precedent to be recorded. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** On that note, the Chief Whip has conceded and I will now give the Floor to Honourable Mustapha Sellu.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for giving me the Floor. I want to take the cue from the Deputy Leader II of the Opposition regarding the Consumer Protection Agency. We only hear about this Agency probably when approving nominees of this Agency. The work of this Agency should be felt by the people, but this has not been happening at all. I really want to know what the Board or the head of that institution is doing. I am sure like the Deputy Leader II of the Opposition said, we should not just be mindful of what goes to us. This is about service delivery and this Agency has a lot to do in this country. I want to urge the nominees who will be going to serve in that particular Agency to ensure that it performs its functions given to them by this House effectively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to share an experience with you. Recently, I bought a machine from a dealer and I was given a receipt. After a week, I found out from my mechanic that the machine was a counterfeit. I called the dealer to inform that the machine was not good. I went there for a refund or to give me a more upgraded or original one. I said I would add the money just to get something original. He told me that S.O.[2], 'me are don sell oh.' Just imagine that a businessman was speaking to a Member of Parliament like the way he did. I have given him my money, but what he gave me was substandard. I think about a month ago, I saw the head of the Consumer Protection Agency and some staff on social media, going from shop to shop along Abacha Street to identify and weed out expired goods. I think that is not enough at all because our people in the provinces do not know about the work of this Agency. I think they need to popularise the activities of the Agency. Parliament approves the Agency's

budget every year, but nothing much has been achieved. There should be community engagements through radio discussions on the importance of this Agency. The people should know what they are doing for this country. You would agree with me that the Agency advocates on behalf of us the consumers, but it is not happening. Even if you bought something from a shop and later realised that it is substandard, by the time you return it to the shopkeeper after one hour, you will end up in police net.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have been talking about the mobile company network and the manner in which their network coverage is malfunctioning all over the country. I think nominees for this Agency have a lot to do. They have to demonstrate that they are fit for purpose and are ready to perform their functions as expected by this House. People are suffering out there and one thing I want to encourage you to do is to look at the Act very carefully, especially the Board Members. They should know the Act to their fingertips if they want to perform their duties effectively. After parliamentary approval, they should read the Act carefully and understand the relevant Sections or provisions. The Act gives you the power to oversee the Agency's activities because that is the only weapon you use to do your work, otherwise it is going to be the head of the Agency who will be telling you what to do and you be following them blindly. You have to improve on the frequency of your engagements in terms of the number of times you have to meet per quarter or per year or half yearly. You have to let the head of the Agency know that he/she should be reporting to you. The President and the Act have given you the powers to oversee the particular Agency in order to checkmate the excesses of the Management team. The public want to feel the presence of this Agency in terms of what they do

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will now go to the NRA. It is indeed a privilege for me and I want to thank the SLPP for giving me the symbol to represent the party as Member of Parliament in this House. This is because in 1996, when I was attending the Bo School, I heard about Dr John Karimu, but I never knew I would have the privilege to talk with such a personality or to even meet him. Today, Dr John Karimu is here and I am a Member of Parliament taking part in deciding his fate. He is here seeking the approval of this House as Board Member of the NRA Board. Dr John Karimu is a household name in this country. He has been nominated to serve on the NRA Board. There is no way you can write the history of NRA to completion or concisely if you failed to mention his name. He is the brainchild of that particular institution; and today, he is going there to supervise the said institution. I am very sure that we will get the required results this country needs in terms of revenue mobilisation or how we can increase our revenue base. Dr John Karimu is a professional in that area. I only hope and pray that the Chairman of the Board will give him the free hand to deliver or provide his expert opinion on issues relating to tax administration and revenue

generation. Like I said earlier, he is an expert in that area and he is one of the founding members of that institution.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the composition of the NRA Board is very unique. I think it comprises eight members, four statutory and four other members outside. Quite recently, the Agency did not have an office on its own, but they were using the office space of NASSIT, but they are paying rent to them. In Sierra Leone, almost all the institutions are in rented offices. Cumulatively, they are paying about a million dollars on rent and that is too huge. I think it is time for the NRA to have their own building that can house all their departments and this Agency.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me bring this to your attention that the Board that was manning the affairs of NRA awarded a contract to construct their own building. The contract is about twelve million dollars. I am sure they have paid **8%** to the contractors, but that was a wrong decision they made. They should have approached an investor to fund that project and the Government serves as guarantor. I am certain that after 10 to 15 years, you would have completed payment of the loan and the building belongs to you. You can even name it NRA House, a one stop building where you have all departments or sectors. This is something we have to look into very seriously. The NRA is directly under the supervision of the Committee on Finance. This is an issue we need to look at carefully. The Board Chairman is here and we have already approved him. This is something we have to follow and I am sure that money has gone down the drains. NRA does not have money to pay for that contract probably due to the wrong approach. We have to look at it carefully. I want to urge the Chairman and the rest of the Board members to ensure that the contract is being looked into. We can lure investors to fund this project in the form of loan that can be paid within 15 years. The loan Agreement will be brought to Parliament for approval and NASSIT's yearly rent will be used to offset their liability.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Point of Order. I am sure we are not dealing with that particular contract because we do not have its details. However, he is the Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee and NRA is being supervised by this Committee. Today, we are here to approve Members of the Board, so when we have issues of that nature, you should summon NRA to explain how the process went and report to this Parliament. We are discussing about the nominees and we should not bring sensitive issue like this one because we do not have details of what you are telling us. I believe we should expunge this particular issue from our records. As Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee, please use your good office to investigate the said contract. The issue you have raised is extremely important, but use your good office to investigate it properly. If NRA has done anything against the law, you bring it to this

Parliament for decision to be taken, but for the purposes of this debate, let us restrict ourselves to the approval of these nominees. I thank you very much.

**HON. MUSTAPHA SELLU:** Thank you Very much, Mr Leader. I was just admonishing the Board because such decisions are not taken wholly and solely by the head of the Authority; they have to go through the Board. This is why I was admonishing the proposed Board members. I have issues with the composition of the Board, I will take cue. I hope I will be given the support and the free hand to go in details outside of the camera. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I will take two more speakers and then we conclude.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we are here to discuss very important issues that affect the lives of our people. I hope, when we shall be discussing the budget, some of the issues we are raising here today will be highly considered. We want to build the capacity of institutions, especially the Consumer Protection Agency. I am sure a lot has been said about this Agency and its role in our society. However, I was expecting Members of Parliament to tell us what this institution is all about and their manpower planning. We want to know their staff strength and their capacities to do the job they are expected to do. Again, most times we tend to blame institutions for not implementing the provisions in the law. As Members of Parliament, have we asked ourselves if we have done the right thing in terms of ensuring that we capacitate those institutions with the required resources? What are the qualifications and capacities of the staff in those institutions? We are expecting the Standards Bureau to work closely with the Consumer Protection Agency. Mr Speaker, I have said in this Well that the health issues we are facing today are as a result of the ineffectuality of these institutions. We have diseases that were not common in this country, but they are now prevalent, such as hypertension, liver and kidney damage, etc. These are diseases caused by what we eat. Do you think the Standards Bureau is capacitated enough in terms of manpower and equipment to thoroughly examine the goods we import into our country? I am sure the answer is no. This is why I always say we build institutions to kill our people and we pretend to know nothing about what is happening. This is sad, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I can assure you that we do not have an effective and operational Standards Bureau at the Quay anymore. Therefore, whatever comes into Sierra Leone, it is left with the private people who are operating at the Quay and not Standards Bureau. All of us know that when the private sector interfaces with government institutions, their focus is to make profit. When it comes to food importation, this aspect is left in the hands of the private people who only care about making profit. The Standards Bureau is a deathtrap. I have said this year in and year

out, and I will continue to say it until that institution is capacitated to address the problems it was established to accomplish.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member from Moyamba was talking about institutions renting buildings for offices. I hope the issue he has raised will be looked into by the ACC. Those were very serious allegations and came from the Member of the ruling party. This makes it more serious because the MP is privy to the information more than us. I want to thank him for being patriotic and I hope if we continue in this trend, we will make Sierra Leone a better place for all of us.

**THE SPEAKER:** And he is representing the people of Sierra Leone; therefore, whatever he says should not be taken out of context. He was making an honest contribution and he wants to see improvements in service delivery. Please, do not take it out of context.

**HON. ABDUL K. KAMARA:** No, it is not. I said he was privy to some information. He is the Deputy Chairman of the Finance Committee and that makes him privy to information. I am sure that is what we should be doing as Members of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Member spoke about office space. I will take the advice of the Deputy Leader of Government Business that we are not here to talk about that issue today. I think when we shall be looking at the budget, we would be considering institutions that are renting private houses in this country. You would agree with me that huge sums of moneys are being spent on rent. For instance, EPA abandoned their building located around 98.1. As young people, we should raise some of these issues, so that they can be addressed. I want to admonish nominees of the Board to look at these issues very carefully. We have seen people in this country who are appointed to serve in areas they never studied. Today, if you go through the resume of Dr John Karimu, you would notice that he is not an Economist, but his performance was exceptional. He is indeed a very good coordinator. He is a man who is willing to learn on the job and is always ready to work with people. I am sure this is what we should embrace. I am still reminding you to work with other people on the Board. There are Boards that have held institutions to ransom because of their own selfish gains. We want to see you promoting or representing the interest of the institutions and not your personal self.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have to improve the lives of our people by monitoring the foods that are imported into the country. The Standards Bureau should be effective and they should work with the Consumer Protection Agency. As a Parliament, when we shall be debating the budget, let us look for key institutions that are dealing with the lives of our people. You would agree with me that approximately **90%** of the sachet water that we drink is not being purified. Do you think the

Standards Bureau is testing the water or do they have the vehicles to carry out oversight activities over these water companies? I thank you very much.

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

**HON. EMILIA L. TONGI:** Thank you very much, Mr speaker. I want to thank his Excellency once more for these nominees. The number of women is almost equal to the men. I thank him for keeping his promise and I hope he continues in this direction until 2028. All the nominees are qualified and equipped for their various appointments. They are ready to work and I want to congratulate all of them in advance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about two people, Dr John Karimu and Madam Susan Williams. First, I will start with Madam Susan Williams. She and I attended the same secondary school and we were brought up by a British white woman called Mrs John. She is late now and may her soul rest in peace. I know that Madam Williams is going to do a very good job because she was brought up in a very decent manner. We almost have the same spirit in terms of serving this country. I am sure she is going to do everything within her power to show that what a man can do, a women can do better. I wish you good luck and I hope you will make us proud.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let me talk about Dr John Karimu. This man played a great role regarding the establishment of the NRA under the former President, Dr Tejan Kabba of blessed memory. May his gentle soul rest in peace. Who does not know Dr Karimu? This man has given so much to this country and to the people of Sierra Leone. This is why it is very difficult to forget him. We are happy to have him and the present leadership of the Public Accounts Committee [PAC] is working in collaboration with the NRA to raise more revenue. PAC is going to be another talk of the country this year because we are doing everything within our powers to ensure that the NRA generates more revenue. NRA is the heartbeat of Sierra Leone and this Parliament will do everything to make sure that tax arrears are paid. The current Chairman of the PAC is a no nonsense person. I am sure Dr Karimu is a plus to the NRA, considering his wealth of experience with that institution. The PAC is doing everything to ensure that the NRA succeeds. I wish you good luck. I hope and pray that you will not disappoint the President, especially the ladies. Please make us proud and in the event you encounter difficulties in your offices, we have the Female Caucus you can call on. We will be obliged to protect you in your offices and provide the necessary assistance. I thank you very much.

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

**HON. SAA E. LAMINA:** I thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank his Excellency the President. Sierra Leone, as a country, is never in drought of knowledge or experience.

The resumes of the various nominees speak volumes. For this singular honour, I thank his Excellency the President for earmarking good breeds to serve this nation. Mr Speaker, a week ago, I got a very bizarre experience when I visited one of the Ministries. I will not call the name of the Ministry and I have forgiven them. That particular Ministry dodged, forgetting that I operate a dual system. Sometimes we want to import some of the good things we see at ECOWAS. Section 107, sub-section 2 is very clear. It says: **"A Minister may be summoned before Parliament or a Committee thereof— 1. to give an account of any matter falling within his portfolio; or 2. to explain any aspect of Government policy."** Unfortunately, the Minister does not have the power to summon Parliament or a parliamentarian. Therefore, whenever we go to those ministries, it is a privilege that we are accorded with the maximum respect. I will not call your name today, but a repeat of what happened will leave me with no option, but to mention your name. The Constitution gives us the power to summon you here or in our Committees. So, whenever we go to you to solicit information, you have to cooperate with us. This is because we operate a dual Parliament and we want to be in line with our foreign policies. We do not want people to misdirect our country's foreign policy. When Members of Parliament go to your offices, do not close your doors at them. They are not beggars; at least we have salaries that can take care of us. You should not dodge or close your doors at us; S.O [2] are nor dae. You have to respect Members of Parliament. Do you know what it takes to win an election? We want these nominees to succeed.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, do you know why some of us never failed an exam? It is because we always employ the SQRRR; and when you employ the SQRRR, you will never fail an exam. The 'S' is for you to survey what is before the student. I am sure handling a text book alone or the cover of the text book speaks volumes. The 'Q' is for you to ask yourself questions before the potential examiner asks questions. The 'R' is for you to read. There is no alternative, but to read before you can do well in your exams. The library life is fading away these days; we do not have good libraries at all. The other 'R' is for you to recite, either cognitively or otherwise. I am not talking about reciting the Quran or what we commonly call 'marabu.' I am certain that if you recite certain formulae, you will be able to remember them during examination. It is a matter of must that you have to recite them. The last 'R' is the 'review' stage of your studies. Therefore, if you employ SQRRR, you will never fail an exam. I speak to you on the footprint of administration and why you should not have alternatives to fail. For the Board members, you have to plan ahead of you master, who is the Chairman. If you have good ideas, bring them to the table and discuss how to implement them. You have to organise yourself properly. You would agree with me that people who are to



implement certain activities always plan and coordinate well; and after coordination, they direct and evaluate same.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I wrote my first Master's thesis twenty years ago and I learnt certain things by heart. You have to plan, you have to organise, you have to coordinate, you have to direct and evaluate ideas before you give command. This will help you not to succeed. We love our nominees and we do not want them to fail in their various offices because we want to succeed as a nation. I am convinced that if they succeeded, we would continue to win elections over and over again. Please apply the formulae that will enable us to succeed. You also need to study the leadership styles of certain leaders. Are they democratic or autocratic leadership styles? Are they transactional or transformational? When you study all of them, you now judge and think about how to transform your institution. That will make you a transformational leader.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am saying all these because I do not want our nominees to fail. It was in the good spirit of the late President Ahmed Tejan Kabba of blessed memory to transform Sierra Leone by establishing and reforming key institutions, such as NASSIT, Human Rights Commission, NaCSA and NRA. Dr John Karimu, being the Guinea pig of NRA in those days, we saw how he mobilised resources for the state. It is like me serving as ex officio to a Council as a former Mayor. I will teach Council members on how ward committees operate or how they can support their Councillors. I will also teach the administrative core staff how they can meander with mutual respect to the political wing and how the Mayor can be thoroughly guided to take decisions. In this regard, Dr John Karimu knows all the crucibles at the NRA. He knows the legislative pains he went through in trying to establish this particular institution. Today, he is going to the same institution, which is the cooking pot of this nation, to continue to add more value that can increase revenue generation. I hope the objectives he could not accomplish back then will be accomplished this time. Sierra Leone will have enough to pay our debts as well as to establish tangible developments. I have no doubt in Dr John Karimu's ability to perform. I know that he will do well and he is going to be a very good team player for the rest of the other members.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to comment on Sahr Francis Gbondo, a veteran politician. I have never seen a resilient politician like this man. I have never seen a resilient politician like Chief Sahr Francis Gbondo. He is now a regent Chief. He contested elections several times. I can see Hon. Tom Tucker is smiling. He has been contesting against Hon. Tom Tucker in that particular part of Kono District and his persevering spirit has brought him to this Well of Parliament. I believe he is going to seek the interest of the consumers. When I search from google, the definition of consumer protection is to seek the interest of the consumers, whether they are treated

unfairly. I am sure that is your role and you to work with the Standards Bureau. I have been battling with typhoid for the past one week. I am still on typhoid treatment. I asked myself if I have been eating unhealthy foods. There is no way I eat unhealthy foods. I drink pure water, but how comes I contracted the disease? I have been battling with typhoid for the past one week, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I will not cast the blame on the Consumer Protection Agency, whether they inspect the water we drink or the foods we eat. I want you to seek the interest of consumers and try to set a bright example. This is because some people have expired foods in their shops. In fact, everybody here is consumer, including the nominees before us. There are expired goods in the markets. The question is, how protected are we? We consume foods every day. We have to treat this issue very seriously. You have a large number of constituents to protect. You have to set a very bright example against 419ers and fraudulent traders, be you retailers or wholesalers. They are very wicked. As my colleague said, we are hearing diseases such as hypertension, liver and kidney diseases all over the place. These sicknesses are foods related. These diseases were not prevalent three or four decades ago, but today they are here with us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I hold a very strong belief that Chief Francis Gbondo and Chief Younge, who has been working so hard in this city as traditional authority and Chief Pessima will seek the interest of us the consumers. I am a consumer and definitely we will have divine healing. I urge Members from the Opposition Bench and us from the Ruling Bench to swiftly approve these nominees. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Honourable Member for such a wonderful contribution. At this point, we are going to round up the debate. Let me take a moment to recognise the presence of the Chairman of the National Revenue Authority, former Minister of Transport and also recognise the presence of Mr Massaquio, the Director General of the NCRA.

**HON. ABDUL KARGBO:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, most times it is very difficult to round up a debate because you would have had the opportunity to hear from various speakers. We have a set of Sierra Leoneans who are willing to serve this nation. The Consumer Protection Commission has an important role to play in this nation. The lives of Sierra Leoneans are highly dependent on the role the Consumer Protection Commission plays. You would agree with me that we have a good number of buildings that are collapsing due to substandard building materials. It should also be the business of this Commission to monitor these materials that are being imported into the country, or else the lives of Sierra Leoneans will be exposed to danger. One of the functions of the Commission is stated in Section 5 of the 2020 Act, to monitor the operations of the

consumer markets and make recommendations to the Minister. How many recommendations has the Commission made, over the years, to the Minister? There are lots of expired goods that are still in the markets. We have goods without expiring dates. In Ghana, over 119 students were affected by food poisoning because they ate expired foods being sold at the school. They suffered from serious abdominal pains. So, the Commission has a role to play in terms of protecting the lives of the consumers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Commission also has the responsibility to conduct research on consumer protection policies. They should be coming up with policies and forward those policies to the Minister in order to ensure that they are implemented. How many policies have they recommended to the Minister? I have always said that it is unfair for you to serve and do not make any difference. I am certain that most of these appointments are not just for salaries, but they are meant to impact the lives of Sierra Leoneans. So, if you are appointed to serve a particular, but failed to correct what is happening, you are also part of the problems that we are facing in this country. The Commission has to step up and ensure proper monitoring; otherwise our people will continue to be exposed to the same dangers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the sachet water they sell is without expiring dates. There other goods that are without expiring dates and this is disastrous for us. Amidst what we have stated, there is no evidence to show that somebody has been arrested or held by police or the Commission for selling expired or substandard goods. Mr Francis Gbondo has the responsibility to make a difference; Mrs Koloneh Sankoh has a responsibility to create a difference; and Mr Mamoud Kabba has a responsibility to make a difference. You have to go to the markets and popularise the rights of the consumers because most consumers do not know their rights. I am sure all of you have the moral obligation to create a positive difference. All those going to the Consumer Protection Commission Board should do due diligence for the benefit of this nation. Madam Susan Williams also has the responsibility to make a positive difference. We are doing this for our people; we have to protect our kids; and we have to protect those who are constructing houses. Most of the problems we are facing are preventable, but because the Commissioners are not doing their work properly, that is why the Disaster Management Commission is being pressurised. We prefer to manage disaster than to prevent it. It is cheaper to prevent disaster than to manage it; and one way to prevent disaster is through the effectiveness and efficiency of Consumer Protection Commission. I want the nominees to be different from all those who have been in the Commission by engaging the radio stations to sensitise the people on their rights. You have to expose those who are selling expired commodities. They should be held accountable for what they are doing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to talk about the NRA. Of course, one of the problems we have is our inability to collect the required revenue. We impose taxes, but we do not collect them. If you are efficient in collecting taxes, you do not need to impose more taxes. We do not collect our taxes; instead, we look for ways to impose more taxes on the people. Reports from IMF and World Bank are not favourable regarding revenue generation. If we do not generate revenue for our government, we will resort to bank borrowing. The World Bank recently stated that government has borrowed too much from the commercial banks. I am sure if we are efficient and effective in revenue collection, it would have saved government a lot. We have to be very robust in the collection of revenue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I know that the Chief Whip wanted to shower praises on Madam Memunatu Rogers, but we have said times without number that in this Parliament, we are Sierra Leoneans. I am saying this because when we see a good Sierra Leonean, regardless of his/her political affiliations, we are ready to support and say the truth about the nominee. If they do not say good thing about your country, where else will they say it? So, when somebody is good, whether he/she is SLPP or APC, we should not hesitate to say it at all. We want to categorically state here that the appointment of Madam Rogers is not a mistake. She was not appointed because her brother is a Member of Parliament; she was appointed because of her merits and qualifications. I was part of the Committee that interviewed her and we were so impressed with her submissions and academic qualifications. She graduated with a first class and since then, she has been so exceptional. As a Parliament, we are appreciative of the fact that you are appointed not because of your qualifications; it is not what you have; but what you can give to the community. The question is, how will Sierra Leone benefit from your appointment? What changes have you brought to the institution while you were there? They will give you no answer because they did not leave any legacy. I do not want you to be part of those who failed to leave positive legacies while they were serving. You have to do something that will positively affect this country. I believe if every appointee has that mindset, Sierra Leone will not be where it is today. Mr Chief Whip, I have done your job and... - *[Inaudible]*.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:**... - *[Inaudible]*. You are definitely going to do the job for us. His Excellency the President has decided to bring you on board so that you will help him to deliver. You are not appointed to this office because you are the most handsome men or beautiful women in the world. He has bestowed his confidence in you to deliver for the people of this country. If you failed, you would not just fail His Excellency the President because this is his second and final term. You would be killing his legacy. If you failed, you would be failing us Members of Parliament. I believe most Members of Parliament here will have to face the people for elections and the things you do are the

ones we are going to tell our people. Ordinarily, we are not charged by law to take any development to our people. Our principal responsibilities as representatives are to represent you, make laws and provide oversights. We have the fourth one which has been misunderstood by our people; i.e., taking developments to the people. This has been removed from us. So, we only have three core functions. This is why when nominees are before us, we admonish them to go and work for us. If you failed, it means you have failed us as well. That is why the composition of the Appointments Committee constitutes the leadership of this Parliament and it is expected that when once His Excellency appoints you, you face us and we do due diligence in making sure that we approve your nominations and at the end of the day, we recommend you to this House for approval.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, it is difficult for nominees to be recommended to this House and they are not approved. This is because Members of Parliament believe that the decision we make at the Appointments Committee level is the best for all of us. So, when you would have taken your various offices, be mindful that you are working for His Excellency the President; you are working for Sierra Leone and this Parliament. I want you to know that we are under pressure as a country and we are lacking behind. We want you to come and help His Excellency to develop this country. He has so much vision, but that vision cannot be accomplished without your supports. That is why he has decided to bring you on board.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the nominees who are going to the National Revenue Authority [NRA]. It is not a secret that the NRA is the bread basket of this nation. Today, we are facing constraints and a lot of allegations are being levied against the NRA and one of them is failing to meet revenue target. Thankfully, the current Board members are people that have served that institution. The Chairman was once a staff of NRA. Dr John Karimu is one of the founders of the NRA and also served as Director General of that institution. We all know how he manned the NRA at a point that they were able to meet their obligations. You know how you manned the NRA, despite the challenges encountered. I am sure you know what should be done in order to create a positive difference. Again, you now have the opportunity to serve as Board member, which is the highest policy making body. So, the things that you did right must be done again and the good things you wanted to do at that time, but were not done, you now have the opportunity to do them. I am sure posterity will judge you for whatever you are going to do.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, before Dr Karimu left the Authority, he had visions he wanted to accomplish. Many people quoted him, saying that if I were still at the NRA, I would have done things differently. You now have the opportunity to go and

serve as a policy maker at the highest level. Mr Kabineh Kallon is here and he served under your administration. You all have the experiences whilst you were at the formative stage of the NRA. Please, make sure you support the current management. We know that the NRA is facing challenges at the administrative level, but you have to make sure you bring them together. If they are not united as a family, the government will continue to face financial challenges. Please use your experience and expertise to develop the Authority. Of course, you have the support of your close friend and I have known the two of you for a while now. I can state here that you are levelheaded individuals. Please make sure you support the Management team.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to talk about the young lady. I am sure she heard from the various speakers. You have a very good certificate from the University, but this is different because it is not a classroom business; this is administration we expect you to use what you have achieved from Fourah Bay College to support the institution. I want you to strengthen your relationship for the benefit of the people of this country and the Bar Association; and for the benefit of the President of Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, for the person who is going to the Consumer Protection Commission, it is not a secret that the Standards Bureau needs to do more in Sierra Leone. I am sure all of us know that we have expired goods all over the country. We have goods that are about to expire in the shops. We have substandard goods. I have said here that the buildings that are collapsing are as result of the substandard building materials that are used to construct houses. For instance, the iron rods that are imported into the country are substandard. These commodities pass through the Quay, but we still have substandard building materials. This is why our buildings are collapsing and it is a worrisome situation. So, you have a lot to do in that regard. Most of the foods that are imported into the country are not properly inspected. A Member of Parliament just stated that our health system is challenging. This is because the foods we consumed are also affecting us. If you went to the hospitals for treatment, you would be diagnosed of typhoid and malaria at the same time. In fact, these sicknesses are part of us now. I want to admonish the nominees to help us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Honourable Kekura Vandy from Bo District wanted to say a few words about Madam Koloneh Sankoh. He still remembered the year you served at the DIBRA. He just whispered to me that you were very effective during the year you served the DIBRA. They wanted to disadvantage them, but you were straightforward and you stood by them. I want to thank you very much for that and I hope you will continue in that direction. These are some of the things you should do; so that in future, you will be remembered. He had wanted to say something about

you, but the Speaker did not recognise him. I know the Honourable Member has a lot of respect for you and if he had been given the opportunity to speak, he would have explained to us exactly what happened.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank the nominees and to wish them well. To the young man, I want him to join the others who are like parents to him. I can see the age difference between him and Members of the Board. Please treat them like parents and make sure you work together for the glory of the National Consumer Protection Agency. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and Honourable Members. With that being said, I now move that the Second Report of the Second Session of the Sixth Parliament of Committee on Appointments and the Public Service be adopted by the House and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agreed To]*

*[Motion of the Committee on Appointments and the Public Service has been carried]*

**THE SPEAKER:** It is my singular pleasure to say congratulations to all of you for having been nominated by His Excellency the President and approved by the people's representatives in the House of Parliament. You have a sacred responsibility to discharge, on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone and to effectively represent the policies and programmes of His Excellency the President. The President has introduced his big five game changers. In this Parliament, we are supporting the policies of the President, particularly the big five game changers with special emphasis on agriculture.

Honourable Members, it is also important to note that the NRA has so much to do. Sections 5&6 of the NRA Act, 2022, placed huge responsibilities on the Board to provide oversight. Whatever that is happening between the NRA and the Public Accounts Committee in terms of revenue we will continue with it, but we want to encourage the Board to pay more attention to the activities of the NRA. This is because if the NRA failed, the government will not succeed. The implementation of government programmes depend on the revenue the NRA generates.

Honourable Members, much has been said about the Consumer Protection Agency by Members of Parliament. I hope, when you go there, you would put your feet down to ensure that the team works towards improving our society and reduce the number of disasters that are affecting all of us. I am sure if we have been doing the assignments during the entry stage of these goods, we would have done better. It is my pleasure to congratulate you, particularly Chief Mathew Younge, the Mende tribal head of the Western Area. He brought many tribal heads from other tribes and chiefs to grace this wonderful occasion. Chief Mathew Younge, I know your pedigree and what you can do. I know you will go there and perform exceptionally well. You are not only representing

the President, but all the sixteen tribes in Sierra Leone. So, you have a very big task to deliver and I know that the 'sowaes' came to accompany you. We will continue to support you until you make the Consumer Protection Agency a better Agency. On that note, I want to thank Members of Parliament for their contributions.

## **GOVERNMENT MOTIONS**

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

**MADAM KADIATU ALLIEU [*Deputy Minister of Finance*]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following Agreements, which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2024:

- Grant Agreement – Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Grant Agreement [Second Additional Financing for the West Africa Food System Resilience Program. Phase 2 Under the Multi-Phase Programmatic approach between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [Acting as Trustee and as a Supervising Entity of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.
- Letter of Agreement Transition Support Facility [TSF] Pillar III, Enhancing Efficiency in Public Debt Management Institutional Support [EEPDMIS] Project for the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- Financing Agreement [Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project] between the n the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
- Agreement [second additional Financing for Free Education Project] between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.
- Republic of Sierra Leone: Financing Agreement IFAD Grant No. **2000002586/** Loan No. **2000002587/** Additional Loan No. **2000003095/** Grant No. **2000002586/** Additional Grant DSF No. **2000003094/** Additional RPSF Grant No. **2000003757** Agricultural Value Chain Development Project [AVDP] [Amendment to the Financing Agreement] dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023.
- Republic of Sierra Leone Financing Agreement Loan No. **1-893-SL;** Grant No. 1-DST8115-SL. Additional Loan No. **2000002312;** Additional Grant No. **2000002311.** Rural Financing and Community Improvement Programme – Phase II [RFCIP2 the Programme] Amendment to the Financing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Dated 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.



- Loan Agreement Construction and Equipment of the Riyadh Referral Hospital between the Saudi Fund for the Development and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, dated 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.
- Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
- Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund [MANO River Union Road Development and Transport Facilitation Programme – Phase IV], dated 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.
- Subsidiary Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, represented by the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Sierra Leone regarding the Sierra Leone Second Financial Inclusion Project: Dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Financing Agreement for the Free Quality Education is a project that is aligned with the Sierra Leone priorities and development partners' strategy, particularly the National Development Plan, 2019 and 2023 and the Educational Sector Plan 2018 to 2020. It supports the Free Quality Education Programme, aiming at providing Free Quality Education to all children. The project addresses significant challenges in the education sector, such as low learning outcome, inequitable access and a poor trained teaching workforce. Its implementation is timely and necessary. The project aims to improve the educational sector in Sierra Leone, directly benefiting one million, seven hundred students, forty nine thousand teachers, and school management community members across seven thousand, six hundred schools. Additionally, it would build capacities and promote ownerships in sixteen districts. The main objective is to enhance the management of the education system, teaching practices and learning conditions through various components. We have six components as listed below:

Component 1: Policies, governance, accountability, and system administration.

Component 2: The teaching management and professional development.

Component 3: School level and educational development.

Component 4: Project Management coordination and monetary.

Component 5: Contingent emergency response and

Component 6: COVID 19 educational response, which includes development outreach strategy and supporting distance learning. It will also promote safe school reopening and community engagement.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this project will focus on vulnerable children, providing learning materials and alternative pathways, strengthening monetary systems for out of school children and community awareness. The grant requires no repayment of principal or interest, only commitment fees of **0.5%** per annum on redraw funds.

[2] The protocol of Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Africa Development Fund [ADF], the Mano River Union [MRU] development and transport facilitation programme. Phase [4] is about forty million United State Dollars, signed on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024. The programme aims to enhance connectivity between Liberia and Sierra Leone to promote sub-regional immigration entrance. The different components are climate resilient and upgrading of roads. Climate resilient, transport and trade facilitation immigrated institutional support and project management, which includes strengthening the capacity of executing agencies, hiring consultants and supporting programmes implementation with resource. It includes constructing border control stations and promoting customs training to facilitate the African continent's free trade area. The programme is critical for improving road transport access, reducing transport cost, facilitating the movement of goods and people, and enhancing the living conditions in the region. Its timely implementation is essential for achieving regional integration. Some of the project benefits include reduce transportation cost and travel time, enhance agricultural protection and poverty reduction. It improves road safety and regional trade innovations. The targeted beneficiaries include the population of Sierra Leone and the Mano River Union region. The African Development Bank will contribute about forty million United States Dollars in grant with the frozen day of the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2027.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Financing Agreement, which deals with the Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association, is about forty million United States Dollars, signed on the 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2023. This project aims to create a more inclusive and resilient financial sector for small and medium enterprises in Sierra Leone. It consists of several key parts as mentioned below:

Part 1 deals with adoption and usage of transaction. These include enhancing access point to facilitate the use of digital payment methods through point of scale terminal, mobile wallet and agent network. It also includes national payment system and infrastructure, which includes the upgrade of roads, growth and settlement and

automated houses to meet international standards. It includes enabling environment, which will strengthen the regulatory framework and cyber security for transaction accounts while building the capacity of the Bank of Sierra Leone.

Part 2 deals with increased access to credit for micro, small, and medium enterprises.

Part 3 deals with Project Management, monitoring and evaluation.

Part 4 will include contingent emergency response. It provides immediate assistance in the event of crises or emergencies. The primary beneficiaries are individuals and businesses in Sierra Leone that lack financial inclusion with focus on women and persons with disabilities. The project will directly benefit medium, small, micro enterprises, financial institutions, mobile money operators and various governmental and public institutions. This project is crucial for expanding financial inclusion by promoting the use of transactional account and digital financial services. Thus, it addresses the disparities in access to finance. This initiative supports the goals outlined in Sierra Leone's medium term, national development plans and the international strategy for financial inclusion, 2022-2026. The total cost of the project is forty million Dollars with a commitment charge of **0.5%** per annum on withdrawn funds calculated after project implementations. The payment date set in on the 15<sup>th</sup> June and December 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the Grant Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agriculture Development. The total amount is fifteen million Dollars and it is a **100%** grant. This grant will enhance and strengthen financial systems by improving access to financial services for agricultural development. The programme seeks to secure existing initiatives nationally and ensure sustainability through collaboration with other donor support projects. Components include; strengthen rural finance systems, project management, and capacity building. This project aligns Sierra Leone's medium term National Development Plan, 2024-2030, focusing on food security, human capital development and job creation. It aims to reduce poverty and enhance food security. This programme targets farmers, small scale entrepreneurs with particular emphasis on women and youths across all districts, aiming at reducing poverty and food insecurity. With the significant portion of the population of women, empowering them economically is crucial for overall community development. The project supports the government developmental goals and strengthens the roles of financial institutions.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have the loan Agreement between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Saudi Fund for Development. Construction and equipment for Riyadh referral hospital is fifty million United State Dollars, dated 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2023. This project aims to build and equip new referral hospital at Lungi,

very close to the airport with the capacity of one hundred and fifty beds. It will provide high quality beds and medical care services to the people. The hospital will have a basic unit such as general surgery with the necessary operating rooms, emergency wards, pediatric wards, etc. as well as technical and administrative support units.

Component 1 involves construction of basic infrastructure, intensive care units, isolation buildings, staff and visitor housing and other ancillary buildings in the proposed hospital with supporting infrastructures, such as sanitation, solar systems, water connection system, renewable energy and other facilities.

Component 2 deals with equipment. The hospital will be furnished and equipped under the financing agreement. Consultant services include preparation of designs and supervision of project implementation. This project will address the current challenges in the health sector at Lungi and its environs. It will also help to reduce the death rate of children and pregnant women. The target beneficiaries of this project are the people of Sierra Leone, particularly those from the Lungi community and the entire North-Western Region of Sierra Leone. The project is aligned with the government's medium-term national development plan to reduce mortality rate of children and strengthening the national healthcare system. The repayment term of the loan is twenty years, including the five-year grace period. The government will repay this loan at a rate of **1%** per annum on the principal amount of the loan that is withdrawn on the outstanding payable semi-annually on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April and 30<sup>th</sup> of October each year.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we also have the Agreement for second additional financing for West African food system resilience programme phase II, under the multi-phase programmatic approach. The total amount is twenty five million and it is a **100%** grants, signed August 4<sup>th</sup> 2021. This is to enhance preparedness against food insecurity and improve the resilience of food systems in Sierra Leone. The project components include:

- digital adversary services for agriculture food scarcity management and improving monitoring systems. It will upgrade national capacity for food security information, enhance pests and disease management, and foster regional collaboration.
- strengthen the digital services by enhancing climate and meteorological information for stakeholders, ensuring timely access, and promoting sustainability in data services.
- consolidate agriculture innovation systems by strengthening national and regional research centres, modernised extension services, and promote technological access.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, this Agreement will facilitate trade or implement trade scoffers, harmonise policies and improve food security. The value chain development will support financing and capacity building for agricultural

competitiveness and market access. It will improve immediate food security needs, provides cash transfer, support local food production, and enhance diversified food production. It will also facilitate rehabilitation of assets and provision of resources in emergencies. This project will strengthen the project implementation unit to manage activities, reporting, procurement, financial management, and compliance. The Agreement targets the vulnerable population, particularly **40%** of women across the districts in Sierra Leone. It aligns with Sierra Leone's medium-term national development plans and national agricultural transformation plans, addressing resource gaps for sustainable food systems. The project responds to food price inflation, exacerbated by the Ukraine-Russian conflict, which has tripled food prices in Sierra Leone. The total cost is twenty five million, with a **0.5%** annual service fee on withdrawn funds.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, there is the letter of Agreement, transition support facility. This will enhance efficiency in public debt management, institutional support project between the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund. The total amount is one million, two hundred United State Dollars, signed 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2023. This project aims to achieve macro-economic stability by improving public debt management practices, enhancing transparency and building staff capacity. The components include:

- strengthening capacity in public debts management by modernising legal frameworks and supporting the development of a domestic debt market;
- enhancing transparency in reporting, improving public debts statistics and ensuring regular publication of debt related reports;
- improving project management by supporting the implementation and oversight of project activities. Sierra Leone faces a high public debt distresses, necessitating the improved management to enhance resilience and governance.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the direct beneficiaries will include the Ministry of Finance, Audit Service Sierra Leone, and Bank of Sierra Leone, while the broader population will benefit from better public resource management and reduce debt burdens. The total cost is one million, two hundred United State Dollars, funded by the AFBB grant. There is government contribution and technical assistant from the Commonwealth Secretariat. This initiative aims to create a sustainable public debt management framework that addresses current challenges and promotes long-term economic stability.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, amendments to the Financing Agreement for agriculture Value Change Development with total of five hundred and seventeen thousand, six hundred and forty seven United State Dollars [**\$517,647**], signed on the

22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023. The purpose is to enhance agricultural production and productivity, especially for rural smallholders, women, and persons with disabilities. The components include:

- enhancing vegetable and groundnut production. This will provide high-yield seeds and machinery, and improve post-harvest handling through solar powered storage facilities to reduce losses and improve market access;
- digital agricultural extension and market information. This will establish a digital platform for remote training and extension services, addressing disruptions caused by COVID-19 and fostering gender awareness. The project aims to support livelihoods by ensuring access to necessary agricultural inputs, market information and support for marginalised groups. The initiative will enhance income for women and persons with disabilities, promote gender equality and help cope with economic challenges. The project was signed during the COVID-19 pandemic for financing through a grant under the IFAD, requiring no repayment. It aimed at improving resilience in rural communities during the pandemic. Overall, the project seeks to improve agricultural productivity and resilience, particularly among vulnerable population in Sierra Leone.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Republic of Sierra Leone for the spotlight initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children in Sierra Leone. The amount is fifteen million Euros, signed on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2024. This funding will support actions to eradicate violence against women and girls, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goal five, which is Gender Equality. Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023 targets a significant reduction in gender-based violence. Addressing violence against women is critical for societal development in Sierra Leone. The project aims to mobilise the community to recognise violence as a violation of rights, fostering improved participation of women and vulnerable groups in national developments. This initiative will provide resources for programmes that prevent gender-based violence through education and community engagements. The immediate beneficiaries include women and children affected by gender-based violence, as well as the broader community members through education on healthy relationships. There are also support for legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms. Violence against women in Sierra Leone is deeply rooted in cultural attitude and historic factors. A multidimensional approach will address the interconnected nature of violence through improved laws, social norms, changes, survival services to support women's rights.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratifies the following agreements which were laid on the table of the House on Friday, the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2024.

- Grant Agreement – Global Agriculture and Food Security Program Grant Agreement [Second Additional Financing for the West Africa Food System Resilience Program. Phase 2 Under the Multi-Phase Programmatic approach between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [Acting as Trustee and as a Supervising Entity of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023.
- Letter of Agreement Transition Support Facility [TSF] Pillar III, Enhancing Efficiency in Public Debt Management Institutional Support [EEPDMIS] Project for the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- Financing Agreement [Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project] between the n the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2023.
- Agreement [second additional Financing for Free Education Project] between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2023.
- Republic of Sierra Leone: Financing Agreement IFAD Grant No. **2000002586/** Loan No. **2000002587/** Additional Loan No. **2000003095/** Grant No. **2000002586/** Additional Grant DSF No. **2000003094/** Additional RPSF Grant No. **2000003757** Agricultural Value Chain Development Project [AVDP] [Amendment to the Financing Agreement] dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023.
- Republic of Sierra Leone Financing Agreement Loan No. **1-893-SL;** Grant No. 1-DST8115-SL. Additional Loan No. **2000002312;** Additional Grant No. **2000002311.** Rural Financing and Community Improvement Programme – Phase II [RFCIP2 the Programme] Amendment to the Financing Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Dated 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.
- Loan Agreement Construction and Equipment of the Riyadh Referral Hospital between the Saudi Fund for the Development and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, dated 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2023.
- Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
- Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund [MANO River Union Road Development and Transport Facilitation Programme – Phase IV], dated 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2024.
- Subsidiary Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone Represented by the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Sierra Leone Regarding the Sierra Leone Second Financial Inclusion Project, dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

*[Question Proposed]*

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to thank you for giving me the Floor. I also want to thank the Minister and the Ministry of Finance for bringing these Agreements to this House. Mr Speaker, like the Minister rightly said in her submission that these Agreements have less or no cost implication on the government, I think that is a laudable venture and we only hope and pray that these Agreements will be implemented in good faith. Usually, Agreements are brought to Parliament for ratification, but Parliament is completely left out during the implementation stage. The drafters of the 1991 Constitution did what they did in order to ensure accountability and checks and balances between the Legislature and the Executive. This has not been the case because most of the Agreements that are brought to Parliament are not fully monitored by Parliament during the implementation stage. Sometimes we have to lobby to go for oversight. I think we have to change the narratives this time.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, when it comes to oversight in this Sixth Parliament, I am not sure whether people are lobbying. I am very sure and confident that in this Sixth Parliament, every Committee is financially positioned to go on oversight. So let that statement be expunged from our records.

**HON. MUSATAPHA M. SELLU:** I thank you, Mr Speaker. I am sure lobby in parliamentary terms is permitted. If the resources are not enough, you have to lobby. If we have thirty Committees, then we have one or two hundred million Leones, we have to lobby. It is not bad and it is a legal term within the parliamentary framework. I take the cue, but let us make it very clear that it is legal.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** The correction you made to the Member of Parliament from Moyamba is in place. Maybe he does not understand or he is failing to understand the dynamics. The statement he just made has something to do with the image of Parliament; and for the attention of the public, when you talk about lobby, the public lobby Parliament and Parliament does not lobby. We are the supreme legislating Authority. This is for the records, Mr Speaker. I agree with you **100%** that in this Sixth Parliament, Committees that have gone on oversight were adequately catered for. So, they have no reason to lobby. In fact, you do not lobby. It is a wrong word. Parliament does not lobby for financial assistance to go on oversight. That statement undermines the good image of Parliament. Nobody is permitted to lobby. The resources may not be enough, but I believe it is okay for you to do your work. Nothing can ever be enough for anybody, even if we are paid five thousand Dollars per month, it will not be enough. Recently, this particular Parliament, under the current leadership has ensured that



Committees go on oversight. It may not be enough, but it is adequate. So, we want that statement to be corrected.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I have asked the clerks to expunge that from the records and I will allow him to correct same.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Anyway, it has to do with grammatical deficiency. I take the cue, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable, I will allow you to correct that statement. Please do not take the cue, but withdraw that particular statement. There is no grammatical deficiency in understanding what you have said. What the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said is very simple. The point is, in this Sixth Parliament, the support for oversight has tripled from what it used to be. Like the Leader said, nothing can be sufficient and nothing can be enough, but what was provided was adequate enough to do our work. So, let us do not belabour the point. Make your point and do not throw innuendos. Thank you.

**HON. MUSTAPHA M. SELLU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, the funds were adequately available and we have enough to undertake oversight activities. Madam Minister, the Islamic Development Bank and other banks, such as World Bank have provided support to this government and even successive governments. The point I want to make is very clear regarding the implementation stage and the role of Parliament in terms of providing oversight. This is because when donors give grants or loans, they have what we call performance indicators. They disburse the funds in tranches; they do not disburse **100%** like the Agreements you have just brought to Parliament. I am sure even if it is two hundred or four hundred million Dollars, they are not going to disburse everything at one go; it is going to be disbursed in tranches or phases. You have the feasibility stage, the preparation stage and the implementation stage. They must have accomplished the first stage before they move to another stage. they have to do what they call evaluation and present those reports. It is based on the tangible results and evidence that you present, that they will have to disburse the next phase of that. One thing about the Ministry of Finance that I want to bring to your attention is about the debt management.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have a sector in the Ministry of Finance that handles debt management. In other parliaments within the sub-region, we have committees that are responsible for debt management. I attended a meeting and I realised that it is only the Sierra Leone Parliament within the sub-region that has the Committee on Finance to look at all those sectors. In other jurisdictions, they have the Committee on Finance and the Committee on Debt Management. For a government to enter into any new debt, it has to go through that Committee. The Committee would

have to look at the debt burden and advise accordingly. You would agree with me that additional debt will have some negative impacts. In terms of implementation, this is where we have to step as a Parliament to ensure that these Agreements are ratified and also provide the necessary oversights. When Agreements are brought to this House, we either ratify or reject them. We are not allowed to make any changes. I think that is something of the past because we are involved at the inception stage and we make our inputs. When an Agreement goes to Cabinet or Parliament, by every standard, it must have gone through scrutiny and that is good for this nation. So, when it comes here, it is just a matter of ratification.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to reiterate that receiving loans is not an issue because there are gaps and those financing Agreements are meant to fill those financial gaps. Let us ensure that once these Agreements are ratified, the funds should be used for the intended purposes. For example, we do not want to look at the component of education as constructing buildings only. We have to look at trainings for the teachers, provision of teaching materials and mobility for the pupils. We have to look at many other factors, even accommodation, feeding for boarding home schools, etc. I think these are key issues we will be looking at regarding the entire component of education. When we talk about health, there are critical issues we have to look at. It is not just paying the medical personnel, but we have to provide the equipment to enhance their work. We have ambulances across the country, but how do we manage them? I think that is another key component we have to look at. We should also look at the fuel component and DSA for drivers.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I am happy that the Minister has once resided in the West. When we call 911, less than 20 minutes, the police are at your door step. If you called the firefighters, they respond in less than 20 minutes. So, I think these are some of the issues we should be looking at if we are to ensure effective service delivery. When you look at this financing Agreement, one may want to know how to manage these resources in order to get the desired results. This is because there is no Agreement without key deliverables and timeline. The manpower is something we will have to look at because it is crucial. You cannot have an Agreement to implement healthcare programme without the manpower. You can only monitor something effectively when you have basic knowledge of what you are monitoring. If I sit before an Accountant or an Economist to review a document, there are key economic jargons I should know. So, you have to look at the issue of manpower and how they are appropriately deployed, so that we get the desired results. I thank you and I hope and believe that these Agreements will be ratified by this House.

**HON. RIGIATU KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My own take regarding these Agreements is accessing the funds by the farmers. That is my own area of intervention. Mr Speaker, accessing the funds by the farmers is very challenging. If you looked at the issue that occurred after the COVID 19, the Bank of Sierra Leone made available fifty million Dollars to the farmers, but the criteria that were set were so tedious that only few business people were able to access the funds. Most of these business people are the ones with light skin. I do not want to mention their names, but they are the ones that were able to access these funds. Why? It is because you should have a house in Freetown as collateral, and not just in Freetown, but in expensive areas, especially in the Western Area. Fortunately, our fair in complexion brothers were exposed enough to have houses in the Western Area and most of their houses are already with the banks. Our people from the provinces were not fortunate to have houses in the Western Area and that is very challenging for them.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Minister mentioned fifteen million Dollars for the farmers. I want them to look at the criteria being set. Recently, the President spoke about the ten million Dollars the Bank of Sierra Leone made available; and as I speak, only four businesses were able to access that money. In fact, one master farmer went through the process which was so rigid. At the end of the day, she was told that the house she presented as collateral is just four years old. So, she was disqualified from accessing the funds. My advice, as a farmer and out of experience to the Ministry of Finance is that the government should take the responsibility to place either a grant or a loan at the bank. This is because some of the moneys being announced are owned by the bank. Of course, they have to be very careful on how they disburse these funds. If the government can put moneys in the bank, the farmers will have access to such funds. For instance, if you looked at what the Central Bank of Nigeria was doing for the past two years, they de-risk the loan and the criteria to access the loan were so simple. Therefore, a lot of farmers in Nigeria were able to access the funds. In fact, they gave subsidies to the youths.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want the Ministry of Finance to look at this carefully because accessing the money the Minister has just announced will be very difficult for the farmers. If you looked at the IFA the Minister, talked about, they established the Apex Bank, but I will confirm to you that most of these banks are giving loans to the teachers. Almost **90%** of the loans are given to teachers. Farmers cannot access those loans. Well, you cannot blame them because the risk in production is so high that they are scared. So, somebody has to take the lead and who is going to take the lead? I am sure only the government can make sacrifices. Mr Speaker, even the fifty million dollars they gave, most of the commercial banks did not apply for it because

the risk was **100%** on the banks. We all know that when you talk about farming, especially in production, you have a lot of risks, such as pests, flooding, drought, etc.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the Ministry should also look at the area of insurance. This is because if farmers can access insurance, then some of these moneys from the commercial banks will be accessed. The banks will agree to give you the loan because if there is any risk, the bank will fall on your insurance. If these steps are not taken, we will be going through the same thing over and over again. Most of our farmers solely rely on the Ministry of Agriculture for their inputs because they cannot access loans from the banks. If they could access loans from the banks, I do not think if they are doing agriculture for business; I do not think they will rely **100%** on the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, let us take another example, which has to do with fertilizer. Usually, the Ministry gives fertilizer very late and farmers are only applying fertilizer maybe once in planting season. We are now about 1.5 for upland, which is 1.5 metric tons per hectare; and for the lowland or swamp, we are about two metric tons per hectare. This is one of the least, if not the least in Sub-Saharan Africa. I am sure other countries have five or eight metric tons per hectare. It is because they are following the agricultural practices. Sometimes you have to apply fertilizer maybe twice during the cropping/planting season, but it is rather unfortunate that we only apply fertilizer once. Sometimes we do not apply it at all. I always tell people that sometimes the things given to you freely can cost you more than the ones you pay for. Government cannot give everything, which is understandable, but if government can give some, the farmers will go to the bank and collect the balance. We have told farmers that they should not be doing farming just to eat, S.O [2] 'hand to mot.' They should be doing it for business and you cannot do farming for business if you only cultivate five or ten hectares. I think that is what I wanted to say. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I thank the Honourable Member for that brilliant contribution. Having listened to her, I think it is of importance that we do not take any other speaker because she has said everything expertly. The master farmer has said everything expertly. So, Leader of the Opposition, we have to round off this debate.

**HON. DANIEL B. KOROMA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, as I always say and that is my position that going forward, as long as the rules or the so-called tradition concerning Agreements brought before Parliament for the ratification, as long as so-called tradition remains the same, then I am forced to say, I did not see any reason why I am here. For the records, I always say, based on our so-called tradition, these Agreements brought before us are here to fulfil formalities because we cannot change or alter anything. It is either we accept it or

reject. To me, this does not make any sense. These Agreements are meant for the development of this country and I see no need for this House to reject them. However, some Agreements need amendments, but our so called tradition says we cannot amend or do anything. For me, I am weak and demotivated to even talk about these Agreements because it does not make any sense to me. Therefore, if there is any problem, there is no way I can make it better. For the purpose of formality, let it be known that what I am saying now is just for formality sake because I cannot do anything. I cannot make it better and I will not reject it because I believe the intention of government is to develop this country. I cannot stand against the development of this country.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to refer you to the Financing Agreement relating to Agriculture in terms of value addition. Value addition in this country is absolutely lacking; and as a result, the entire burden is being placed on the farmers and the risks are on the farmers. We have financial and natural risks. Sometimes there is government policy risk, which is also called force majeure. All these risks are being placed on the farmers without motivation. In other countries, your business as a farmer is to plant and produce. You only have to plant as much as you can. They have gone to the extent that harvesting crops is not on you because they want to reduce or minimise the burden of risks. Your business is to farm, cultivate hectares as possible. By the time you start harvesting, you continue to plant and you will be paid. As long as it reaches harvesting stage, that is the end of your job. We do the harvesting and the storing. We do the storage process and the value addition is now on us. If we are to go to factory to add value and to distribute, it is now on us.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some countries pay before farming, as long as you have proved yourself to be reliable. You will be given approximately **70%** to enhance your capacity. You would agree with me that vegetables are very expensive in this country. In places like India, it is next to nothing. You can use one hundred Dollars for two weeks on food. The reason it is expensive in this country is that vegetable products are usually fragile and can degenerate quickly. Therefore, farmers are not motivated to produce more. If you cultivate fifty acres of tomato farm in this country, by the time you start harvesting them, everything degenerates because you do not have the capacity to preserve them. In other countries, even if you are producing five hundred hectares, you do not have problem with preservation. When you produce, they will see the products and they pay you. The rest is not your business. Even if everything is destroyed, it will not affect you and the burden is on the government. This will encourage farmers to do more. In Sierra Leone, if you hire a tractor to work for you for one week and it happens that the operator is not happy, you are in trouble. So, the best thing farmers do is to hire the tractor for two or three days. This is because if I

hire the tractor for two or three weeks, the rice will be destroyed because I do not have harvesters. No harvester to harvest and the harvesting capacity is low.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, some of the harvesters are very big to go to the extreme rural communities and you need lubricants for those harvesters. They cannot use timber bridges to go across; and as a result, we cannot produce more because farmers are not motivated. We have many risks in terms of preservation. In fact, this reminds me of a Bill that has taken many years. It should have been completed, but due to administrative problems, it is not. It is entitled, 'Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition' and it is being pioneered by the Office of the Vice President. It is proposing that there should be a national food plan and that plan starts from the Vice President's Office, being the Chairman of the Board that oversees the national food plan. That National Food Plan should have food banks from national to regional or chiefdom levels. In other words, there has to be food banks like Joseph in Egypt. I am sure you know the story of Joseph in Egypt. Joseph proposed the establishment of food bank for the coming seven years of famine. You would agree with me because it is in the Quran and the Bible. He was very successful. In fact, in those years, Egypt even fed the surrounding countries, including Israel. So, we need to inculcate that culture here. We need food banks that can serve as a no go area for anybody until the peak of the hunger season, i.e., June, July and August. At this time, the food can be sold to ordinary consumers at cheaper or affordable prices. It can also be given to some companies because I believe government is not a good business entity. Government should not involve in business, but it can facilitate business activities. This is lacking and that is why we are in perpetual hunger. We will continue to take grants and loans without realising anything.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have received huge amounts of moneys regarding the Tomabom project, but we are yet to feed ourselves. Sometimes I begin to wonder how these moneys are being expanded over the years. The Tomabom rice project has been in existence even before I was born. You would agree with me that successive governments have received lots of moneys for the Tomabom rice project, but we are still struggling to feed ourselves. There is no reward from Tomabom project; Tomabom is always crying foul. "I want to feed you but you are bewitching me." We are bewitching Tomanbom. Therefore, Tomabom cannot perform and Tomanbom is capable of feeding us and the rice can even be exported to other countries. Tomabom is enough for local consumption and the rice from Port Loko and Kambia can be exported. We used to export rice and other agricultural products to other countries.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, of course, I am sure most of the agreements are grants and grants do not exert financial burden on the people of this country. They are

gifts, but there are strings attached and if we failed to do the needful, they may be withdrawn or terminated. Regarding the loan for the hospital, I wanted to reserve my opinion till the presidential debate, but I will say something about it. The health sector in this country is very challenging. We are however seeing some developments at 34 Military Hospital, but we are yet to get the desired results. The developments at that hospital are being championed by our First Lady. However, I believe that the project is big and it is going to change things positively.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, my Personal Assistant had an attack and I had to take him to the hospital at 34 Military Hospital. I paid regular visits for a period of three days. Do you know what happened? I observed that for every two hours, a stroke victim will be brought to the hospital. This is alarming, Mr Speaker. The receptionist revealed that there were no beds, but she admonished patients that they had an understanding with Connaught Hospital and can refer patients to Connaught Hospital. This happened three times in my presence. With such statements being made, the people cried for that revival. I do not know if you understand what I am saying. As soon as 34 Military Hospital made a referral, people started crying. That shows how bad our health system is. Apart from Private Hospitals, our health system is very bad. So, any move towards improving our hospital is long overdue.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the question I want to ask may be answered during our presidential debate. Where are the proceeds from the Commissions or Inquiry? This is because a name was tagged on all proceeds of the Commission of Inquiry, which was laudable. I was so impressed, but when I checked, ECOMED is exploiting us. The President stated that all moneys must be tagged to a name that those moneys would be used to construct a diagnostic centre. I want you to take note of this very seriously. I will ask this question again in a better way during the presidential debate. I must commend this move, even though it is a loan Agreement. I wonder how that loan will be repaid through these hospitals. If it were a Bill, maybe it would have been understandable. However, there is nothing in the Agreement that specifies how these loans will be repaid. Nevertheless, any move to improve the health sector of this country is commendable.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, based on my opening statement, Members of Parliament have nothing to do to these Agreements. We cannot change anything here; our role is to just say one or two words and ratify the Agreements. On that note, I urge my colleagues to ratify these Agreements. I thank you very much and God bless you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to thank the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. You know, if the Agreements were locally drafted, wherein the parties were all in Sierra Leone, I would have supported his position, but when it comes to international Agreements drafted by

parties that are outside Sierra Leone and the Ministry of Finance or whosoever that is representing our government, it will fall under the International Law Principle of Pacta Sunt Servanda and it becomes international agreement. We have to respect them but, our provision in Section 118[1] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6 of 1991 gives us no other power, but to ratify. So, we listen to the contents of the Agreement and we contribute to it and in the course of the implementations, I am sure most of the contributions we make in this House are taking into due consideration. They will guide the implementation of these Agreements in terms of building the capacity of the institutions that are set up. On that note, I will ask the Deputy Leader II of Government Business to conclude.

**HON. SAA E. LAMINA:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, you would agree with me that none of the Agreements before us is controversial. I am going to do justice to Section 40[4] of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No. 6 of 1991. I hold the belief that the Executive or Cabinet has never deceived this House. Whatever they brought before us, I am sure due diligence must have been done. You have done your part of the Agreement and our own role is to ratify as spelt out in Section 40[4[D] of the Constitution of Sierras Leone. Mr Speaker, whether they are Treaties, Conventions or Agreements, it is our job to ratify. Several documents have been brought here before us and we are very interested in Agreements that have do with food security.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, we have the Grant Agreement between Sierra Leone and the International Development Bank. This document was brought on the 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2023. Today, we have the privilege to ratify it and several others. Clause [1] Global Agricultural Fund Security Programme and part [3] Clause [3.1] to develop and implement Economic Community for West Africa States [ECOWAS] agricultural trade and market standards Mechanism. This document is very important. It was the dream of the founding fathers of ECOWAS and I think Yakuba Gowon and Gnassingbé Eyadéma were the two founding fathers of ECOWAS. They were the ones that actually projected in 1975 to form ECOWAS. This document is before us and making agriculture our flagship programme. When I looked at the geography of this country, Sierra Leone has enough capacity, whether in the highland valley swamps, crop protection, agricultural extension and animal husbandry, we have enough capacity in terms of agriculture. The Member of Parliament from Koinadugu will tell you that when we talk of animal husbandry, we have enough capacity to expand.

Mr Speaker, the Deputy Minister [I] of the Ministry of Finance can take advantage of the road between Koidu and Kaimaidon. It is 78 killometer road and it is 47 miles. That road connects the inland valley swamps and the outland towns in Guinea, such as Gegedu, Kisidugu, Serekure and beyond. It also connects Mali, Ivory Coast, Guinea and



Liberia. So, it just fits into the ECOWAS criteria and mechanisms. If that road is constructed, it will connect several ECOWAS countries. Today, everybody is looking for mineralisation in Kono District; but by the time that road is constructed, Kono District will be an international trade centre. Overnight, you will begin to see goods, whether in trailers or trucks coming from Mali, Ivory Coast and Guinea to Kono District. I am sure it will not only be in Kono, but the sixteen districts as well. I will definitely get their ready-made goods. I urge the government and the Minister, who is representing the government, to consider that road. It should be prioritised, so that we will have enough agricultural products.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I also want to elucidate on the Free Quality Education Agreement, with specific reference to Part 2[a]. This is very important because it talks about management and professional development of teachers. I want us to prioritise the teachers in the provinces. In those days, there were allowances for the rural teachers. Today, we see a deficit of Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology and even English teachers in the rural areas. Those teachers do not go there because there are no allowances to encourage them. I agree with the Deputy Leader [1] of the Opposition that value addition is necessary. The 2023 Sierra Leone Peoples Party's manifesto pinpoints value addition and I believe the drafters of that manifesto and the leader of the political party have great interest in value addition. We are losing so much because of this value addition. In Sierra Leone, the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources has just **11%** of the national budget. This is so minute. I almost wept five years back when I was in the European Union [EU] Parliament. We have good fish in this country, such as Makerre, Kuta, Snapper, etc. It will surprise you to note that our fish are not allowed in the European Union [EU] market because of packaging and processing. Can you imagine? I want to crave the indulgence of the Deputy Leader [1] of the Opposition for us to move a Private Member Bill for compulsive value addition. You are talking of rough diamonds and coltan. The telephones cannot work without coltan; i.e., where the simcard is being placed or inserted, The Sims are made up of coltan.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, how can we add value to our minerals? The truth is that when we add value to our minerals, Sierra Leone will begin to get quadruple of the resources that are wasted. We have to move a Private Member Bill to ensure that our natural resources, including gold, diamond, Coltan and rutile, cocoa, coffee, kola nut, orange, etc. have value addition before they are exported. It will do us good if we take this seriously. All these Agreements are not controversial. You know, through the goodwill of President Momoh by then in 1991 when the Revolutionary United Front [RUF] actually broke our borders, Yenga was used as a buffer zone and that was done, through his good will. It was used as a buffer zone, so that the RUF could not expand their tentacles to the soil of Guinea and Yenga used to be ours. That simple leverage

President Momoh gave to the Guineans, they have taken upon themselves to do what they are doing now. I asked Guineans the question two months ago at the ECOWAS Parliament. It was a simple question and one of them said that the day I enter Guinea, they will beat me. I challenged them by telling them that they cannot beat me. Who are the people who used to fish in the Makona River before the war? I asked them that question and they could not answer. Who were the people that used the boat or the canoe at the crossing points before the war? Who were the people that used to farm on the lands of Yenga before the war? They could not answer those questions. This shows that the land is ours, but because of their military might and for the fact that they have constructed permanent structures, they decided to bully us. The Agreement talks about the liberalisation of trade, integration, free movement, and I hope it will address the Yenga issue. The military believe in the diplomacy and they speak the language of diplomacy. The former military leader, who is the current President of Sierra Leone and the current military leader of Guinea believe in diplomacy. We want our people in Kailahun District to regain their freedom. We want them to continue their farming activities. They used to sing, dance, farm, fish and trade smoothly. That land solely belongs to them and this Agreement will address that issue. I respect the Executive because they did well and the Agreements are very good. I commend you wholeheartedly for these Agreements. I thank you very much. I urge Honourable Members of the Opposition and Ruling Bench to swiftly ratify these Agreements. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much Deputy Leader for your wonderful contribution to the debate and for making clarification on key issues.

**KADIATU ALLIEU [*Deputy Minister of Finance*]:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I thank you for your eloquent contributions. I want to assure you that all the points you have made would be taken into account as we proceed with the implementation all these Agreements. I want to assure Members of the Opposition and leaders that the issues relating to access to finances for small farmers, access to insurance and fertilizers have been noted and we will ensure that they are considered during the implementation stage. I want to state here that there will be access to grants for rural areas, increased lending for International Food and Agricultural Development [IFAD], increase access to solar, so that agricultural products will be preserved for further processing.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I want to expressly acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition for bringing up the issue of our healthcare sector. One thing that he did not take note of is the new Pediatric Hospital for Children that was opened by His Excellency the President. I am sure that is a great addition to the work. We have taken

a path to resolve or improve the health sector. I have also noted the Yenga issue and it will be considered during the implementation stage. Access to free and quality education was a flagship project and it continues to be a very important programme of the President and the government. There have been trainings for teachers in the rural areas and they will continue to encourage teachers in remote places. We will ensure that they are given the right incentives.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the issue regarding value addition is noted. As we go forward with most of the new Agreements and as we review existing ones, we will ensure that there is a local component that will start benefiting some of these projects. That will not only improve their value, but also to create jobs. With that, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, be it resolved that this Honourable House hereby ratify the following Agreements which were laid on the Table of the House on Friday, 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2024:

- Grant Agreement – Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, Grant Agreement [Second Additional Financing for the West Africa Food System Resilience Programme, Phase 2 Under the Multi-Phase Programmatic approach] between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [Acting as Trustee and as a Supervising Entity of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, dated 4<sup>th</sup> August 2023];
- Letter of Agreement Transition Support Facility [TSF] Pillar III, Enhancing Efficiency in Public Debt Management Institutional Support [EEPDMIS] Project for the Republic of Sierra Leone, Dated 5th July 2023;
- Financing Agreement [Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project] between the n the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29th June, 2023;
- Agreement [second additional Financing for Free Education Project] between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Development Association [IDA], dated 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2023;
- Republic of Sierra Leone: Financing Agreement IFAD Grant No. **2000002586/** Loan No. **2000002587/** Additional Loan No. **2000003095/** Grant No. **2000002586/** Additional Grant DSF No. **2000003094/** Additional RPSF Grant No. **2000003757** Agricultural Value Chain Development Project [AVDP] [Amendment to the Financing Agreement] dated 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2023;
- Republic of Sierra Leone Financing Agreement Loan No. **1-893-SL;** Grant No. 1-DST8115-SL. Additional Loan No. **2000002312;** Additional Grant No. **2000002311.** Rural Financing and Community Improvement Programme – Phase II [RFCIP2 the Programme] Amendment to the Financing Agreement between the

Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, Dated 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2023;

- Loan Agreement Construction and Equipment of the Riyadh Referral Hospital between the Saudi Fund for the Development and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone, dated 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2023;
- Financing Agreement between the European Commission and the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone;
- Protocol of Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the African Development Fund [MANO River Union Road Development and Transport Facilitation Programme – Phase IV], dated 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2024; and
- Subsidiary Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sierra Leone Represented by the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Sierra Leone Regarding the Sierra Leone Second Financial Inclusion Project, dated 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2023.

*[Question Proposed, put and agreed to]*

*[Government Motion by the Deputy Minister [1] of the Ministry of Finance has been ratified].*

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I stand on S.O 5[3] to move that Parliament sits on Monday. This is to enable us to commence the debate on the Presidential Address that was delivered in this Well by His Excellency the President. So, I would like to inform all Members of Parliament, the general public, the media, especially the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Cooperation [SLBC] that the presidential debate will start on Monday at 10:00 a.m. I would like to encourage the media to be fully represented and we expect live broadcast from the SLBC. We want the concerns and opinions of the people's representatives on the Presidential Address to be properly and widely aired. This is important as far as democracy is concern. I thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Any seconder?

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

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, before I put the question, I want to encourage the [SLBC] and the African Young Voices [AYV] to be here at 7:30 a.m. or 8:00 a.m., so that they will be fully prepared ahead of time. I do realise that my friends on the left have prepared sufficiently and they want the international community to see exactly what they are going to say. So, you have to be here to capture every bit of the proceedings.

*[Question Proposed, Put and Agree to]*

*[The Motion for the House to sit on Monday has been carried]*

**HON. ABDUL KARIM KAMARA:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 23. I would like to use your kind office to summon the Minister of Health and Sanitation to this Well to talk to us. This is because recently, the death rate among the youths has increased due to the misuse of drugs in this country. So, let them come and tell us, as the representatives of the people. This will enable us engage our people on the way forward. People are selling all kinds of drugs on the streets and this is terrible. So, let the Minister of Health and Sanitation come and tell us the regulations or policies they have put in place. This is the only country where people who cannot even read and write sell drugs on the streets. They will you, S.O [2], wae u take dis meresin for five hours as a man, u go tinap straight. Our people trust them and they buy those drugs. I am not talking about Coco Samba; I am talking about drugs in general. They will tell you, S.O [2] tek dis, if yu get tit hat, d tit go well wantem wantem.' They sell all kinds of drugs. Most of the diseases we are experiencing have to do with organs failure. So, let them come and explain to us the situation of our people.

**THE SPEAKER:** It says, you should be content with what you have, little be it or much. If you go for things that are not yours, you will be in trouble. You have to be within your limit. That is all I am going to say.

**HON. PETER Y. KOROMA:** Mr Speaker, I stand on S.O. 23 to bring to the attention of this House something that is causing deaths. This has to do with the high tension electricity installation poles. Recently, we realised that there have been frequent accidents along the highways because the high tension electricity poles are installed very close to the roads. We have not seen any protection mechanisms that require the poles to resist shocks. I do not know what the qualities of these poles are, but something has to be done quickly. We need to be very careful, especially after the contractors would have completed these projects. In fact, along Allen Town, there was an accident and all of the sudden we saw the poles folding. I am sure they are not strong to withstand the pressure. We want the Committee in charge to investigate this matter. In some areas, the concrete is below the ground level and that is why when an object hit an electric pole, it will fall along the road. We should look at that project in order to ascertain the quality of the poles.

Finally, Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I would like to say something about the China Railway Seventh Group, with special reference to the Masiaka Road. We have seen how the climate exposes the road. I am sure the thickness of a standard road should be around 40 or 50mm because you have to make provision for heavier vehicles. Around Calaba Town, I stepped down from my vehicle and I measured the thickness of that tarmac. You will surprise to note that it is not within the required standard. We should be considering the maintenance aspect of these roads. This aspect is lacking and

we need to do something about it. I would like this House to summon the authorities concern to see how best we can address this problem. Some of them are pouring concretes, tarmac, and woods along the road. So, this is very important for nation building because we want to see sustainable projects. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Honourable Member. The issue you have raised regarding the erection of electric poles; whether it is within the acceptable standard of the right of way, I will refer it to the Committee on Energy until a Committee is constituted. The Chairman of that Committee will investigate the issue before the end of this Session. The issue relating to roads is sad, but the challenge is that if we want to keep and maintain sustainable roads, we must control the activities of those that are building along waterways. If you looked at the developed countries, you would realise that nothing blocks the waterways. If you block the waterways, it will look for a pathway and once it gets a pathway, it will destroy anything along that way. I think the Committee on Works will look into that because it falls within their purview, including the Committee on Lands. They can engage both Ministries to ensure that we educate our people, even though everybody wants to construct houses. Our people should allow the drainages to run freely. If you looked at the rate of accidents nowadays, it has dropped significantly along the Waterloo highway. Even though new communities are emerging, but the rate of accidents has dropped significantly. You would agree with me that before now, every other day you will hear that there is an accident along Waterloo highway, but that has reduced significantly. This is a huge progress and it is also important for our government. Those who are building along the waterways are the ones causing troubles. This is not only an issue of the Masiaka highway; if you looked around Freetown during the raining season, there are so many potholes being created by the rains. However, your point is well noted and I will encourage the Chairmen of the Committees on Works and Lands to work with the respective ministries.

**HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE:** In addition to what you have said, Mr Speaker, I can say that if you go to that road now, you will find out that even the right of way has been encroached, starting from Calaba Town to Waterloo and Masiaka. If you looked at the activities along that road, you will notice that it is extremely unbearable. Like you said, anybody can just bring sticks and burn them on the streets. The fact that a lot of communities have emerged, the accident rate has reduced. The Masiaka-Bo Road is too narrow. The road from Masiaka to Bo can even be seen as a deathtrap. If we could advocate to government to do an expansion, it will be fine.

**HON. IBRAHIM BARRIE:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker for this opportunity. I visited a Kush Rehabilitation Center in Makeni. It is called Action for the Rehabilitation for drug victims. We are aware of the fact that the President declared a State of Public

Health Emergency against Kush and this House approved it. We established the National Tax Force and the District Tax Force. In Bombali District and in other districts, there is not a single presence of a rehabilitation center for drug victims. So, there are private citizens who are trying in their capacity to establish and to visit that center which has over one hundred drug victims. I interviewed the head of the center and he told me that some of them have shown concerns to overcome the issue of drug additions and this is not just to put them in one place; it requires medical supports and counseling. They have been advocating for government support. I told them that we have the National Tax Force and District Tax Force and that they need to ensure that we support these people.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, these are young people and some of them should be in the police force or service as teachers and doctors. My question is, what are the National Task Force and District Task Force doing? I want you to use your good office to invite the Ministry of Social Welfare and the Ministry of Health regarding this issue. We have to support and provide solutions to this problem. Somebody suggested that if they can partner with the Vocational Training Institutes, then after the rehabilitation, they give them scholarships to go and do carpentry, wielding, etc. This is to consider the issue of reintegration into the society. We have to support them.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much and I do take your Point of Order. I hope the Table Clerks have noted these points. There is a request from the Honourable Whip of the Opposition for us to get the Minister of Health. We also have a request from the Hon. Barrie from Bombali District. So, we can also have the opportunity to revisit them accordingly.

**HON. OSMAN C. ABDULAI:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I stand on S.O. 23 regarding the just concluded Paramount Chieftaincy election in my constituency or my chieftdom. I want to submit here that the petition and injunction based on rumour that there is chaos in my chieftdom is absolutely false and that is why I want to make it very clear that I am not in any way prejudicing the case that is already in court, but my people want the authorities to ensure that external interferences will not undermine the functions of the Judiciary. My people are patiently waiting for the outcome of the decision of the court. They have high respect for the court, but external interference into the independence of the Judiciary could change everything.

**THE SPEAKER:** As you have rightly put it, it is an issue that is before the court. We can only say little about it.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*[The House rose at 2:35 p.m. and was adjourned to Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.]*