



PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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PRESS RELEASES



FIRST ALLOTTED DAY: PARLIAMENT COMMENCES PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Monday 14/08/2023 commenced debate on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency the President Dr. Rtd. Brigadier Julius Maada Bio address he so graciously delivered on the Occasion of the State Opening of the First Session of the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Thursday 3rd August, 2023.

Proposing the motion for debate, Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said it was prudent to lay down the matrix of the President's Speech, in consonance with the welfare and interest of the people and went on to thank the President for His Speech so graciously delivered. The Leader recounted the President's Speech, on the paramount functions and responsibilities of Parliament, and went on to predicate it on democracy as well as good governance.

The Leader highlighted the five thematic areas of the policy drives of the President. "The President has been consistent in the promotion of food self-sufficiency", he said and went on to accentuate the importance of Feed Salone initiatives. He urged MPs to compliment the President on food self-sufficiency. "We should work in unity to address hunger in Sierra Leone through agricultural productivity", the Leader pleaded.

He underscored that Government had already laid the foundation to increase the budget for farmers since 2022, on smart subsidies and went on to disclose the statistical data and money projected to the agriculture sector on food security.

On the human capital index, the Leader heaped praises on the President for providing educational objectives for the people of Sierra Leone as prescribed in the 1991 constitution of Sierra Leone.

On women's representation, the Leader lauded the President for his consistency in championing the empowerment of women in governance and leadership. The Leader praised the President for commending Parliament for enacting laws relating to the empowerment of women into gender mainstreaming.

The Leader pointed out that, President Bio is cognizant of the constitution of Sierra Leone, relative to education, health care, women's empowerment agriculture, as well as other related sectors.

On youth-related issues, the Leader said the youths have been in the mind of the President and went on to underscore the policy attainment of the government, and that, for the private sector, he said the government has provided that platform to establish and employ the young generation through the innovation of policy formulation.

On Public Service, the Leader echoed the policy of the President on revitalizing the effectiveness of the public service. "The public service is the heart of everyone" he said and went on to note that the public service would be revamped under the Presidency, in light of sanitizing the harmonization of the wage bill. "We don't want to move policy like a pendulum, but it should be accurate and systemic," he said.

On economic growth, Hon. Nyuma said the President had laid modalities in place to address the infrastructural development and other related economic growth.

On the Public Election Act, the Leader said the President has promised to review the Act and a committee has been set up to address some other lacunas in the just concluded elections. "President Bio is a righteous man", he said and went on to call MPs on the other side to come to Parliament and serve.

He concluded by calling on all to come together to promote the interest of the State. "The President has given us his policy drive and we should uphold on working and promoting his agenda". The Leader encouraged.

Seconding the motion of thanks, the Deputy Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Hon. Bashiru Silikie thanked the President for his speech and went on to appreciate the people of Sierra Leone for voting the SLPP into governance and Members of Parliament.

The Deputy Leader recalled former President Koroma's speech in 2012 and maintained that boycott is not a parameter for a dialogue on political matters. "The speech of President Bio is very conciliatory", he said and went to appeal to the opposition MPs to come to Parliament to serve the people.

The Deputy Leader said one of the priorities of the President is the "Feed Salone initiatives". He called on the Ministry of Finance to tie up the budget on the government's priority, relative to the Big Five Agenda. He called on the Finance Ministry to allocate 10% of the National Budget to Agriculture to boost agricultural productivity.

On the Free Quality Education, the Deputy Majority Leader highlighted the achievement and the huge gap that had existed in the education sector. Hon. Bashiru commended the President for the policies created to improve technical education to change the narrative in the sector.

On the youth employment scheme, the Deputy Leader commended the Youths Ministry for championing employment and job creation.

In the Private Sector, the Deputy Leader said the budget should speak to what the President has delivered in his Statement by revamping and supporting the private sector. He encouraged the Government to put policies in place that would address the huge interest on Bank loan that is affecting businesses.

He said the President has been truthful to himself by establishing and appointing credible people to serve and boost the economic development of the State.

The Leader encouraged Parliamentary Oversight Committees to do due diligence in their works by overseeing the activities of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

He called on MPs to join the President in making sure that his objectives are achieved.

Hon.Charles O. Abdulai said the President is grateful by thanking MPs for coming to the Sixth Parliament. He spoke on the achievement of the GEWE Act for the empowerment of women. He also requested the creation of female statistical data in all offices.

On the Feed Salone Initiatives, he said the Agriculture Ministry is challenged to provide loan products to farmers.

Speaking on behalf of the people of Kono, Hon.Rebecca Y Kamara said she joined her colleague MPs to thank President Bio for his speech delivered to Parliament. The Honourable Member appreciated the President for his consistency in addressing women's empowerment. She called on her colleague female MPs to make themselves relevant in what they are doing and went on to call for public education on the GEWE Act.

On Feed Salone, Hon.Rebecca said Kono is not only a diamond ground, but also an agricultural productivity area. She praised PC MPs for embarking on agricultural productivity.

Hon.Emailia Lollo Tongi referred to the speech as one of the shortest presidential speeches and went on to congratulate the President for the empowerment of Women. She spoke on the death crises of youth on illegal immigration through the Mediterranean Sea seeking greener pastures. On Youth-related issues, the MP called for employment and job creation and on mental health. She called on MPs to join the President to address mental health.

Hon PC Bai Farama Tas Bubu of Kambia District submitted his contribution to the challenges of the Research Agriculture Center at Rokupu Rice Station. The PC called on the Government to pay more attention to the improvement of the infrastructural development of Rokupu for the initiatives of the Feed Salone project.

Hon. Beatrice M. Kangbai from Bo said President Bio had made a mark in the history of Sierra Leone, in light of the development of the State, and went on to refer to the speech of the President as short and precise to the point. The MP commended the President on the Feed Salone Initiatives and went on to call on the Agriculture Ministry to review some of its policies on agriculture and food diversification. The MP called for support for research and actuality.

Hon.Joseph Williams-Lamin from Bo District applauded President Bio on his initiatives for human capital development. The MP talked about the importance of the Student Loan Scheme for the empowerment of students.

On gender-related issues, the MP said the Government had done marvelously well.

Hon.Musa Lahai from Kailahun District predicated his submission on the economy, Feed Salone Initiatives, and the Security Sector.

He said any country that can feed itself is not a poor nation and went on to call on the Government to involve the military in the project. He also called on the government to include MPs to be involved in the process of Feed Salone initiatives.

On the Security Sector, he said the President is mindful of the security sector and he is providing the basic necessity and logistics for the security sector.

However, the debate continues tomorrow in the Chamber of Parliament.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department
Parliament of Sierra Leone

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