



# PARLIAMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

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## PRESS RELEASE



### PARLIAMENT HOLDS STAKEHOLDERS' CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE TOLL GATE

The Parliament of Sierra Leone on Tuesday 27/02/2024 in Committee Room 1 Parliament Building, held a stakeholders consultative meeting on the proposed increment of the toll-free.

Making his submission, the Opposition Leader in Parliament, Hon. Abdul Kargbo said the engagement is timely and noted that Parliament would seek the interest of the public and the investor to address the proposed toll-free increment. He said Parliament would do the needful as there is no perfect law.

In his contribution to the subject matter, Majority Leader and Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said parliamentary ratification is important on the matter and noted that there is no perfect law, and underscored that both the citizens and the investor, (CRSG) would be protected. "We want people to participate in all that we are doing", he concluded.

Making his submission on the discussion, the Rt. Hon. Speaker of Parliament Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said Parliament is a listening Parliament and noted that the toll gate tariff had been a talking point for the general public. In light of that, the Speaker said, Parliament thought it fit to invite stakeholders to deliberate and find a solution to the matter.

"The toll tariff is of great national importance", he said and went on to note that the agreement between CRSG and the Government was signed and it is a loan agreement "build operate and transfer," he said.

Mr. Speaker highlighted that for the tariff to be simulated "Traffic Data" has to be presented. The Speaker went on to note that both parties should have the traffic data before reviewing the agreement. The Speaker also said the only way to solve the issues is based on the data and that no emotion should be attached.

On the second point, the Speaker said the agreement is a loan agreement to the people of Sierra Leone and submitted that he wanted to know the present status of the loan agreement, "We want to know how much had being collected and how much are outstanding" he said

Hon.Speaker revealed that the total amount of the agreement for the road project from Wellington-Miasiaka is to the tune of US \$ 154 million road agreements, with a 62-kilo meter road, dual carriage with four lanes, and three toll gates.

Mr speaker spoke on the alternative toll roots with another country whilst Sierra Leone had none. He said the toll element tariff enforcement should be brought to Parliament for enactment.

On the timeliness of the tariff, Mr speaker questioned that several factors had to be considered before altering any changes to the tariff.

In his Statement, CRSG Deputy General Manager, Mr. Bin Go appreciated the engagement with Parliament and went on to note that the CRSG company financed and constructed the Wellington - Masiaka Road project and highlighted the benefits of the road towards the socioeconomic development of the State. He also emphasized the challenges the company is facing due to negative road users and the inflation of the leones to that of the dollar.

He said the agreement was signed by the Government and ratified by Parliament in December 2015 and that both parties had an obligation to the agreement. He said the justification of the tariff increment is based on the US Dollar to the leones and underscored that since the establishment of the toll gate, no tariff had been adjusted.

He also said that 2018 should have been the first review of the toll-free and regarding the traffic data, the DG said since the beginning of the construction of the road, CRSG has been providing SLRA with a regular update

In his submission to the discussion, the Minister of Works and Public Assert, Dr. Denis Sandi said in 2023 a letter was sent to him by CRSG to consider the review of the toll-free and in that letter, he said, it highlighted the need for the review of the toll tariff. He said the ministry upon that, invited various stakeholders to discuss the matter, and a team was set up to put ideas together, later he said a report was prepared and sent to the cabinet for approval.

Dr. Sandi explained to Parliament clause by clause that justified the adjustment of the proposed tariff increment and also went on to disclose to Parliament that much talk about terrific data has been presented to the ministry.

Mr Alpha Bah, Driver's Union president highlighted the process of the consultative meeting and decried the proposed toll-free for group 5 from Le 183 to Le700

Mr.Bah highlighted the engagement with his union and gave statistical data on expenditure, considering the toll gate fees, if implemented.

Native Construction and Research Center Mr. Edmond Abu said he is very happy about the involvement of Parliament in the toll gate issue. He said the toll gate fee proposal, when increased would affect every aspect of the daily life of Sierra Leoneans.

Mr. Abu highlighted things that should be done in the agreement that are not in place Ie. Market, Street light, etc.

Mr Alphonso Manley's Representing Civil Rights Coalition for Commended Parliament and the Speaker for allowing CSOs and other bodies to talk about the Tollgate fees.

He also highlighted the importance of engagement with stakeholders and some of the issues discussed. He also touched on the cost implications of CRSG in meeting demand.

The Director General of SLRA, Ing. Alfred Jalil Momodu said two agreements were signed, the works agreement and the concession agreement. The DG disclosed to Parliament that the traffic data provided to SLRA is not comprehensive enough.

"We should be working with them but there is no room for that by the CRSG". He said

The engagement and discussion of the toll gate matter are expected to continue.

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