



# Budget Advocacy Network

"we believe in participation transparency & accountability"

## **NATIONAL PUBLIC PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY (NPPA) SHOULD BE REGULATING AND NOT DEFENDING MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT AND AGENCIES (MDAS) IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT PROCESSES**

**Freetown February 18, 2021**

Budget Advocacy Network (BAN) has observed with keen interest the recent actions of the National Public Procurement Authority, which seem to defend defaulting MDAs rather than being the regulator in different circumstances.

On the 27<sup>th</sup>, January 2021, during the public hearing of the COVID-19 audit report by the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, the NPPA defended MDAs on the procurement of bikes for the COVID-19 Response. For instance, the COVID-19 audit noted that a middleman was used to procure 230 Bikes at an inflated cost of twenty-one million, seven hundred and two thousand Leones (Le 21,702,000) per unit rather than going directly to the primary supplier who is based in Freetown and Bo for a price of twelve million, five hundred thousand Leones (Le 12,500,000) per unit. The NPPA did defend this procurement neglecting **the aspect of value for money**, which is one of their core mandates.

On the 16<sup>th</sup>, February 2021, during the "Gud Mornin Salone Programme" on Radio Democracy, FM 98.1, the NPPA also defended all the sole-sourcing procurements of the Office of The Chief Minister. Even though the laws make provisions for sole-sourcing in certain situations, BAN is concerned over the use of this clause for some procurements. For example, on the issue of the procurement of three vehicles for the office of Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI), the NPPA stated that sole-sourcing was used because the price quoted was slightly below what is in the price norms. Were all the criteria for sole-sourcing fulfilled? We believe that this reason will not promote healthy competition and fairness in the procurement process in Sierra Leone.

BAN is concerned that the NPPA is actually neglecting some aspect of its statutory role of properly monitoring national procurements – which tax payers' monies are used to pay their salaries. As the regulator, the aim is to ensure there is no monopoly in using a set of rules for relief purposes instead of ensuring the desired outcomes, which is to see that the right procurement procedures are followed to the letter. Additionally, if not addressed, monopoly, as a result of the sole-sourcing provision, will erode the people's confidence and this would be detrimental to domestic revenue generation.

We wish to state with emphasis that the NPPA's statutory role as per the 2016 Act is to regulate and harmonize public procurement processes in the public service sector, and promote economic development, which includes building capacities in the field of public procurement **by ensuring value for money in public expenditures and the participation in public procurement**.



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The NPPA needs to be reminded that public procurement is critical for accountability of public expenditure. The process also supports good governance, and it assists with economic and social development and public trust in government. Procurement malpractices are enormous in almost every audit report published by the Audit Service Sierra Leone, which is alarming more so for an area where government is spending close to two-third of the national budget.

In keeping to the desired call for procurement correctness and rid potential corruption emanating from procurement issues, the NPPA should stand ready to safeguard and strengthen the authority rather than seen to be defending entities suspected to have breached public procurement processes or not respecting value for money.

**End of statement.**

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## **About BAN**

The Budget Advocacy Network is organized around the three principles of the budget process i.e., Participation, transparency and Accountability. BAN is composed of local and international organizations such as the Christian Aid (CA), Campaign for Good Governance (CGG), Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), Western Area Budget Education Advocacy Network (WABEAN), ActionAid Sierra Leone (AASL), Search for Common Grounds (SFCG) and Transparency International Sierra Leone (TISL)