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PRESS RELEASE

FIRST ALLOTTED DAY: PRESIDENTIAL DEBATES

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Monday 23/05/2022 commenced debate on the Motion of Thanks to His Excellency the President Julius Maada Bio address, he so graciously delivered on the occasion of the State Opening of the Fifth Session of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone in the Chamber of Parliament on Tuesday 10th May 2022

Proposing the debate, Leader of Government Business Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said President Bio through the speech interpreted his manifesto promises; highlighted several development strides, referenced the untold global stories of COVID-19, and went on to speak about how the government is trying to cushion the economy, improving human capital development, gender equality and women's empowerment as well as financial support to Smaller Medium Enterprise (SME) and anti-human trafficking and empowering women including disabled.

The invitation of the private sector to health Security, support to food security, and aquaculture, climate change, and infrastructure, he noted were all laudable. He asked the opposition to measure four years of President Bio's infrastructure development to that of the ten years of Former President Koroma administration. He Spoke about the barrage of infrastructure development. He expressed disappointment over the inflation of petroleum products and spoke about the fight against corruption and improvement of the condition of personnel, road safety, and ICT infrastructure. He specifically spoke about the government support for old people through NaCSA projects . He finally threw light on so many things that are engendered towards development.

Seconding the motion, Hon. Rev. Sama Sandy expressed happiness over the speech. He recalled that the ambiance of the speech day showed that President Bio would win the 2023 election; adding the statement is an evidence of showing accountability to the people of Sierra Leone. According to him, the management of the global crisis, in tandem with economic growth merely indicated that the government is doing well. The MP zealously elaborated on many

development activities undertaken by President Bio's Government including health, agriculture, education, and youth empowerment amongst others. He emphasized that such strides are demonstration of President Bio's love for the people. He applauded donors' support for complementing government efforts.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara expressed doubt as to whether the Manifesto of the Ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) is different from that of President Bio's manifesto as according to him there are many unfulfilled promises and went on to decry government. He vehemently criticized the government for depriving the people, especially of health, agriculture, and the lack of national cohesion. He spoke about corruption, economic deprivation, and political instability among others. The MP compared the reconstruction and expansion of the Lungi International airport to the proposed Mammah Airport, adding that the former is less costly. He spoke about inadequate water and electricity supplies in health facilities and urged the government to improve on them.

Hon. Paul Sahr Sam spoke about the mandate of the speech, in light of the Presidential statement. He said MPs needed to bring issues during the debate and proffer solutions He thanked Government for reconstructing several road projects in Kono District including the international road linking Guinea. He used the opportunity to appeal to Government to support environmental protection through tree planting and land reclamation. He commended President Bio for the decentralization of education; and proffered to the government to ensure the timely remittance of school fees subsidy; adding this government had recruited over five hundred teachers and approved over four hundred schools in Kono District. He criticized the malpractice surrounding the youth farm and expressed appreciation over the government ambulance service and diagnostic facilities in his remote communities and applauded donors' support to the same sector. He referenced the 2021 Midterm Population Census and supported the Constituency delimitation against the Proportional representation.

Hon. Abdul Muniru Lansana while contributing to the debate decried the conduct of some previous debaters. He expressed thanks to President Bio for giving priority to education and respect to the people. He referenced growth and outlined development in education, energy, the fight against COVID-19, access to justice, the removal of Part 5 of 1965 Public Order Act that criminalizes libel, and an increase in future economic growth among others. He blamed the former government for accumulating more debts and commended President Bio for the positive move.

Hon. Foday Lamin Kabba denounced the last speaker for mockery of the people, referencing the challenges measured in President Bio's speech. He informed that global crisis should not be an excuse, to address social contract, as according to him, President took the mantle of Leadership in 2018 to deliver. He strongly informed that governance was not reflecting on the lives of people and went on to say fuel price was comparatively higher in Sierra Leone. He

Spoke about hunger among the citizenry, and denounced indicators, saying that what is affecting the people on the ground is what he cares about. He said this government has not done anything on township roads in Kabala, because they are already fixed by the previous government and informed that his people are in dire need of water supply and other basic facilities. He read the message of one of his constituents decrying the President and negative of the system.

Hon. Neneh Lebbie while contributing to the debate referenced Hon Dr. Alhaji Alpha Kanu for commending President Bio for constructing the Gberre Bridge. She measured the conduct of previous debaters and recalled the atrocities of the APC that are affecting the people today. She commended President Bio for several recent developments in education, school feeding program, Hands Off Our Girls, and support for the fishing sector amongst others. She used the opportunity to suggest the cultivation of an inland valley swamp and encouraged the people to take into aquaculture. She advised all to think positively about the transformation of the country. Irrespective of the global pandemic, she said President Bio is a nationalistic Leader still trending on infrastructural development, energy to rural communities, and his passion for empowering women.

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