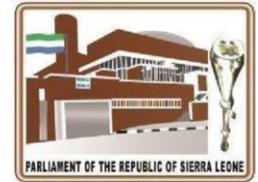




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14th June, 2022

PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT DISCUSSES WELFARE

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 14/6/2022 discussed its proposed Welfare Bill, that is yet to be in front of the House for consideration. It could be recalled that, the gazetted document has flared public debate and subsequently caused discussions among Members of Parliament in the well.

Making his submission on the issue, Leader of Government Business, Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma said he is very disappointed in the leve of bashing from a cross-section of the general public on the proposed bill, that talks about the welfare of MPs.

Regarding the bill, he said there are lot of social media bashings on MPs without consultation and cross-checking with Parliament. "It will not be a secret to present a bill to Parliament on MPs' welfare", he asserted.

Hon. Leader submitted that, the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No.6, Section 74 (4), provides that: "Members of Parliament shall be entitled to such

salaries, allowances, gratuities, pensions, and such other benefits as may be prescribed by Parliament". He also highlighted Standing Order 61, which talks about the "Bill affecting private Rights".

Leader of Government Business used the opportunity to highlight the challenges encountered by MPs in their daily lives, which they do not deserve. He said if there is a Welfare Bill for MPs, Wage bill, and other bills, Parliament would deliberate on it, and do the needful in the best interest of the nation. "We are not fake MPs, we are responsible MPs who are always ready to work and develop the nation" he informed.

He commended President Bio for supporting the Parliament of Sierra Leone on welfare issues and highlighted that, it would be in the best interest of the nation.

"The conditions of service for MPs are appalling and they are suffering to match up with other sub-regional Parliaments" he asserted.

He said in light of all the bashings, MPs, don't renege on their responsibilities to make laws, oversight, and representations."Do not use the social media to blast Parliament, Parliament is open and transparent and accountable to its people, kindly engage us".he said.

The Acting Leader of Opposition, Hon. Ibrahim Ben Kargbo said Parliament is not going to apologize to anyone for seeking the welfare of MPs and acknowledged the support of the President on the welfare of MPs." As opposition, we are in support of the Welfare Bill, when it is in front of the House for debates". He said the bashings of MPs are unacceptable and their conditions of service must be improved as prescribed in the 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone.

Hon. Dr. Kandeh Yumkella, Leader of NGC said he supported the position of the Leader of Government Business and highlighted the constitutional provision and the Standing Order, relative to the welfare of MPs. He said sometimes, controversies are important in the practices of democracy ,and it can help the people understand the dynamics.

The Acting Leader of C4C, Hon. Rebecca Y. Kamara said the conditions of service MPs are deplorable and said that, some MPs barely drive their vehicles, owing to challenges to buy fuel. She said the C4C Party position is in total support of the proposed bill, when it is in front of the House for discussion.

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Segepoh Solomon Thomas said he is in full support of all the earlier submissions made by Leaders of the House for the proposed Welfare Bill of MPs. He used the opportunity to highlight the challenges MPs are facing in their lives. He said issues of MPs should be a national conversation. "Members of Parliament are the most indebted people in Sierra Leone", he asserted. "The public should know that, MPs are being harassed every day in their work", he informed.

The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Dr. Abass Chernor Bundu said he believed that, the entire country is not against the welfare of MPs, but said it is just a tiny fraction of the general public. He said as a speaker, he understands the plight and suffering of MPs. He noted that Sierra Leone is not the poorest country in the world and referenced Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, and Liberia by using their national constitution and National budgets in tandem with upgrading the welfare of MPs.

He said Six MPs in this Fifth Parliament passed away from preventable diseases.

He called on the general public that, anything Parliament intended to do about the welfare of MPs would follow the due process of the law, whilst noting that, Parliament is transparent, open, and accountable in their doings.

Parliamentary and Public Relations Department

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