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PRESS RELEASE



PARLIAMENT DEBATES THE PUBLIC HEALTH BILL 2022

The Parliament of Sierra Leone has on Tuesday 18/10/2022 debated the Bill entitled "The Public Health Bill 2022", which seeks to address issues relating to public health and safety in Sierra Leone

The bill seeks to repeal and replace the Public Health Act, of 1960, to provide for the promotion, protection and improvement of public health and well-being in Sierra Leone, to provide for the protection of individuals and communities from public health risks, to provide for the prevention and control of the spread of infectious diseases, to provide for local

government and community participation in protecting public health, to provide for early detection of and prompt response to diseases and public health threats and to provide for other related matters.

Presenting the Bill to Parliament, the Deputy Minister of Health and Sanitation, Mrs. Princess Dugba Turay said the purpose of the bill is to repeal and replace the Public Health Act of 1960 and to provide for the promotion, protection and improvement of public health and the wellbeing in Sierra Leone.

The Deputy Minister said when the bill would be enacted, it will strengthen the public health system in all regions of the country, and collect data relating to public health emergencies. The Deputy Minister also reiterated that, when the bill would be enacted into law, it would also improve, safeguard and protect all public health-related issues. She said the bill had gone through a wider consultation with stakeholders and requested Parliament for approval.

In his submission the Parliamentary Committee Chairman for Health and Sanitation, Hon. Moses B. Jokie said the bill is timely and long overdue for enactment. He said the parent bill is obsolete, considering the time when it was enacted in 1960, but underlined the promptness of the current bill. He said the bill would safeguard and protect the health sector. According to him, the bill is important for all Sierra Leoneans and went further to highlight the component of the Bill.

Hon. Dr. Mark Mahmoud Kalokoh said health issues should be given the seriousness it's deserved and urged the House to do the needful. On the aspect of qualification in the Bill, he said the person who should be in charge of the Health Commission should have attained over fifteen years of experience in the health sector.

Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay said health is wealth and urged the House to do the needful to scrutinize the Bill. She spoke about the commitment of health workers, vaccination, and other related health issues. The MP commended the Ministry of Health for defeating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hon. Abdul Karim Kamara said for any outbreak of a pandemic, he believed the Health workers are in the right place to combat it, whilst cautioning the upkeep of the infrastructure. "Let us put resources on these structures for the betterment of the country", he concluded

Hon. PC Bai Kurr Kanagbara Sanka III said the bill is a good one, but decried the implementation process contained in the Bill. "Let us look at this bill with the utmost respect it deserved", he started. The Hon. PC questioned the shortage of Doctors in hospitals.

In rounding up the debate, the Acting Leader of the Opposition Hon. Hassan Sesay said solid infrastructure can improve the Health sector in the country, adding that more resources and maintenance are needed in the health sector. He encouraged Medical Doctors to take their

responsibility very seriously. He commended the Ministry for putting the Bill together and requested more attention to their work

In concluding the debate, the Leader of Government Business Hon. Mathew Sahr Nyuma commended the Ministry of Health on the bill and highlighted the the positive aspects of the document. He encouraged Health workers to be professional in their job and pleaded for improvement in the health sector of the country.

After a protracted debate on the Bill, the bill was committed to the Legislative Committee for further Scrutiny.

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