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*Over Domelevo's Forced Leave*



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## Finance

# GAMBIA: LAWMAKERS COMMENCE TRAINING ON BUDGET SCRUTINY

By Aji Fatou Faal

**P**arliamentarians Thursday commenced a three-day intensive training on Budget scrutiny, review and analysis which was supported by the European Union (EU) intends to create capacity building services for the National Assembly Members with the view to enable them to develop an understanding on the role of budget scrutiny and oversight functions for the economic growth and sustainable development of The Gambia.

The training was held at Kairaba Jawara's International Conference Centre in Bijilo, West Coast Region; which was organized by the National Authorising Office Systems Unit (NAOSU) with support from the European Union.

Mariam Jack Denton, Speaker of the National Assembly advised the members to give their attention and time to the procedures that would be shared during the training period.

She said that the annual esti-

mates of the revenue and expenditure of The Gambia, and Standing Order 85, in particular, which calls for the strict observance of the provisions of Standing Orders 81 to 94 in the transaction of financial business in the Assembly.

Speaker Denton further stated that the clear loss of revenue, operational setbacks, missed targets and opportunities brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic on the global economy, the timeliness of this training cannot be overemphasized.

"I would like us to remind ourselves that the National Assembly attaches enormous importance to issues relating to the national budget and the overall financial activities or engagements of this country", she informed.

According to her, she has no doubt in her mind that the knowledge and skills that would be acquired during these three days would help better equip Members and prepare them to execute their mandate as effectively and efficiently as possible.

For his part, Dominic Mendy, the lead consultant said that the National Assembly Members have a crucial role to play in decision making and having such a discourse would enhance their understanding of the national budget, skills and the ability to interrogate and derive the issues related to the budget.

He opined that they are extremely important and powerful and by default responsible. "I know that this process of yours requires a unique stakeholder in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs (MoFEA) with whom you will be both friend and foe as you work together, but you are

**"I would like us to remind ourselves that the National Assembly attaches enormous importance to issues relating to the national budget and the overall financial activities or engagements of this country",**

condemned to working together on this subject matter, and therefore you must find ways of cooperation and where necessary, controlled different exemplified in a baseline professional and technical relationship agreeable to both of you".

Else Boonstra, Counsellor and Deputy Head of Delegation of European Union to The Gambia revealed that the Gambian citizens have been expecting reforms since the change of government that would encourage ethical leadership, the good governance principles of democracy, and an entrenched culture of accountability and transparency in which the National Assembly has a part to play.

However, she added that to be able to discharge these duties effectively, it is important to have a solid foundation of knowledge in terms of proce-

dures, roles and nitty-gritty. This training today aims to help laid those foundations, and this is why they are here today and tomorrow: to further enhance their capacities when it comes to the scrutiny of the national budget.

Hon. Mambury Njie, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs advised members to take advantage of this training forum noting that he expects that at the end of the training that members shall be equipped adequately with robust skills and techniques to enable them better understand the budget when it is laid before; understand what constitutes public policy and establish its linkages to the budget.

"It is expected that a more effective and efficient budget scrutiny and oversight culture will be entrenched within the House", he concluded.



Hon. Mariam Jack-Denton,  
Speaker of the National Assembly of The Gambia

## Civil Society Relations

# GHANA: PNAFRICA, OTHERS HEAD TO SUPREME COURT OVER DOMELEVO'S FORCED LEAVE



Auditor-General, Daniel Yaw Domelevo was directed to proceed-on-leave in June this year

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

**S**ome nine Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including Parliamentary Network Africa, have headed to the Supreme Court to challenge the President's proceed-on-leave directive to the Auditor-General, Daniel Yaw Domelevo in June this year.

They are praying the apex court to declare as unconstitutional, the June 29 directive from the Office of the President instructing the Auditor General to take 167 days accumulated leave.

They are also asking the court to declare the appointment or designation of the Deputy Auditor-General, Mr Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu as Acting Auditor-General

as void and of no legal effect. The CSOs are Ghana Centre for Democratic Development, Ghana Integrity Initiative, Citizen Ghana Movement, Africa Center for Energy Policy (ACEP), Parliamentary Network Africa, Penplusbytes, Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), SEND Ghana and One Ghana Movement.

A statement signed and issued on Monday, October 26, 2020, by the listed CSOs says the coalition of CSOs indicated in their 7 July 2020, press conference that they will head to court if the government does not rescind its decision.

"It will be recalled that on 7th July 2020, a coalition of CSOs called a press conference in response to the President's action and issued an appeal to the President to rescind his directive to the Auditor-General. The coalition of CSOs, which included the undersigned organizations, expressed grave concern over the constitutional and governance implications of the President's action."

The group also intimated that international stakeholder organisations have also added their voice to the calls to get the Auditor-General back to office but all attempts proved futile.

" Both the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the English-Speaking section of the African Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E) also im-

plored the President to reconsider his decision. We indicated at the July 7 press conference that we would consider recourse to legal action to defend the Constitution and the independence of the Auditor-General should it become necessary."

The Statement said the Coalition of CSOs "had hoped that the President would reconsider his decision in light of the deleterious effect of his action on public accountability and the fight against waste and corruption in the management of public finances."

According to the group, "certain developments since the Auditor-General was forced

to leave his office have only gone to worsen the situation, leaving us with no option but to seek the intervention of the courts"

The group says the legal action is in line with their efforts to safeguard the independence of the Office of the Auditor-General and all independent constitutional offices established under the Constitution of the 4th Republic so that they can discharge their lawful mandates effectively without fear or favour and, thereby, play their respective parts in the country's effort to build and strengthen the pillars of constitutionalism, checks and balances, and accountability in Ghana.

**They are praying the apex court to declare as unconstitutional, the June 29 directive from the Office of the President instructing the Auditor General to take 167 days accumulated leave. They are also asking the court to declare the appointment or designation of the Deputy Auditor-General, Mr Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu as Acting Auditor-General as void and of no legal effect.**

## Health

# GHANA: Minority Questions Legality Of COVID-19 Testing Contract At Airport

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

The Minority in Parliament has bemoaned the legality of the government's decision to award the contract of testing of passengers arriving at the Kotoka International Airport (KIA) for COVID-19 to Frontiers Healthcare Services Limited.

The minority caucus says the decision by government is illegal as there is no legislation giving the government power and the legal backing to charge each passenger \$150, or award the contract to the company which they said was registered on July 21, 2020, just a few days to the commencement of its operations at the airport.

"The company, as we have investigated, is owned by Healthcare Solutions Serv-

ices Limited which is owned by the Peter's Family Company Limited, which was also incorporated in June 2020. The Peter's Family Company Limited itself is registered as an offshore in the Dominica and therefore we do not want to believe that this may be another case of family and friends" he said.

The Minority Leader, Haruna Iddrisu who addressed the press on Thursday, October 22, 2020, also questioned the capability of the company to run the test since it has no laboratory and hence had sublet the contract of testing of passengers to the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR).

"The rule is that if you do not have laboratory, you do not qualify for the purpose of undertaking these services. How come they were chosen for the purpose of this?" We are not a banana republic as this is a country governed by law. It is not just exploitative but it is unlawful and we are demanding that to what use the money collected been put to," he said.

The Tamale South Member of Parliament said with the increasing threat of COVID-19 in Ghana, the Minority supported the state and the government to pass the necessary legislation and the release of justifiable finances and funding to contain and combat COVID-19.

"We are happy with the outcome but Ghana is not out of the woods yet and this is not the time to be cele-



Minority Leader, Haruna Iddrisu

**"So, the question is: why did the NPP Government not simply allow Noguchi to conduct the test at a much reasonable and cheaper fee? Why would the Nana Addo-led NPP Government cleverly conjure a scheme to exploit innocent Ghanaian passengers? If you want due diligence and proper work being done, you award a contract to a company which has no laboratory and yet they will depend on another laboratory to undertake the exercise. It only can be a matter of rewarding a friend,"**

brating. We need to solidify the measures we have put in place thus far which has brought us this far and having very insignificant cases of COVID-19 and insignificant deaths being reported across the country," he said.

Mr Iddrisu also mentioned that besides the poorly-crafted scheme being used to cash in on travellers who desired to come back home, the caucus is also concerned about the inability of the Frontier Healthcare Services Limited to deliver the very services for which several travellers are being ripped off adding that "government is not set up for profit

The Minority Leader also intimated that Frontiers Healthcare Services Limited, in a letter dated August 28, 2020, solicited the support of the coordinator of the National Laboratory Network for COVID-19 testing to enable them to do their work which questions why the contract was not directly awarded to Noguchi which would have come at a cheaper rate for travellers.

"So, the question is: why did the NPP Government not simply allowed Noguchi to conduct the test at a

*Continued on Page 7*

## Energy and Extractives

# GAMBIA: Stakeholders Raise Concerns over Petroleum Commission Bill 2020

By Aji Fatou Faal

**S**takeholders from five different institutions were the second badge to be present in the ongoing consultation meeting of the Petroleum Commission Bill 2020, have raised numerous of concerns about the aforementioned bill that needed to be looked for a better



Stakeholders present in the ongoing consultation of the Petroleum Commission Bill, 2020

polish to act for the greater good.

Stakeholders further raised their concerns before the joint committee of PEC/Environment, Sustainable Development and NGOs Affairs on the Review of the Petroleum Commission Bill 2020 at the Assembly Auditorium Hall in Banjul.

The Petroleum Commission Bill 2020 was tabled before House where members debated on the objects and reasons of the bill before it was referred to the relevant committee of the Assembly.

The Joint Committee of the Assembly then remitted the bill which comprising the Public Enterprise Committee (PEC) and Environment Committee of the National Assembly.

The following institutions attended the consultative meeting were: National Environment Agency (NEA), Gambia National Petroleum Company (GNPC), Geology Department and Department of Labour.

Malick Bah, Director Technical Services Network at NEA said that their concern on page 7, (f) (1) under compliance with health safety, security and environmental standards in petroleum activities in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and agreement.

He recommended that they add to ensure environmental and social impact assessment is conducted as part of the instruments that should be looked

into as well.

Bah alluded that under the same section paragraph (d), he did not see downstream where the provision gives the Commission "power to regulate upstream and midstream sectors in accordance with this act."

Candy Jobe, Director of Exploration and Production from GNPC, said their main point of concern is on page 13 part IV under the financial provisions where the funds of the Commission are captured.

"The funds of the Commission are the same as the funds that GNPC expects to derive its capital from in order to commercialise state participation in exploration production".

She explained that it is a trend that the national oil corporations around the world in the pre-production phase before discovery and commercialisation derive monies from the Government. She explained that this funding generally comes from clause 1(b) where it stated monies paid to the Gambia Government come from the signature bonus, training and resources funds etc.

Jobe stated that in other countries, governments put a levy on petroleum products or give fuel imputation monopolies. This enables cooperation because oil and gas activities are capital intensive and require huge capacity build-up.

"So we have noted that the Commission intends to derive

its funds from the same source as GNPC. In principle, we are not against this. However, we have a concern under (d) whereas we would note that under 1(b), monies paid to the Commission from signature bonus from licenses, from surface rental from licenses and money accrued from the sales and licenses of data. We believe this provision enables GNPC to have some sort of revenue sharing mechanism with the Commission", she averred.

She emphasised that the section tends to be stating that all training and resources funds shall be handled by the Commission and GNPC shall not be able to lay a claim from the training and resources.

"We believe it should be a national oil corporation mandated to capacitate the nation as they indigenise oil and gas resources".

"We suggest that the act stipulates that there shall be a revenue-sharing policy or criteria that can be developed later, which would oversee the distribution of these resources," she added.

Mansour Jobe, Director of Legal and Investigations of National Human Rights Commission said page 8, paragraph 8 indicated about local content participation is an important clause but it has not been adequately captured.

He said that the ministry is given the discretion on the recommendation of the Commission to come up with regulations adding that there might not be any recommendation on local content participation which would negatively impact on the Gambian people whom the Commission is going to administer petroleum resources on their behalf.

"I am thinking that in addition to the express regulations that the minister may make... I am suggesting that we add another clause that is clause (c) to specifically indicate that the minister should also make regulation on local content and local participation.

*To be continued...*

## Energy and Extractives

# GHANA: Petroleum Hub Development Corporation Bill 2020 Passed

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

**P**arliament has approved the passage of the Petroleum Hub Development Corporation Bill, 2020, towards the advancement of a petroleum and petrochemicals sector.

The bill upon Presidential assent will see to the establishment of infrastructure such as refineries, port terminal facilities, storage facilities, as well as petrochemical and Liquefied Natural Gas terminal within the Bonyere Traditional Area in the Jomoro District of the Western Region.

It will also promote and develop a Petroleum and Petrochemicals Hub in the country as part of the strategic development initiatives of the Government aimed at promoting socio-economic growth by strategically positioning the country as a Hub for the petroleum downstream industry in the West

African sub-region and the world at large.

The Petroleum and Petrochemicals Hub would be engaged in the supply of petroleum and petrochemical products to satisfy the demands of the domestic market and the West African sub-regional market.

This project is expected to lead to an increase in the presence of major international oil trading and storage companies while encouraging public-private partnerships and joint ventures between local companies and international companies. The project involves the establishment of major infrastructure for refining and processing petrochemicals in addition to the discharge, storage, distribution, transportation and trading of petroleum products.

The establishment of Petroleum and Petrochemical Hub is also expected to contribute immensely to the economic development of Ghana through value addition and job creation. Speaking on the floor of Par-



Chairman of the Mines and Energy Committee of Parliament, Emmanuel Akwasi Gyamfi

liament on Thursday, October 22, 2020, Chairman of the Mines and Energy Committee of Parliament, Emmanuel Akwasi Gyamfi laid before the house the cost of the project and government's intended source of funding for the project.

"The Committee was informed that the estimated total cost of the Hub is US\$60 billion. Out of this amount, the Government of Ghana is expected to contribute US\$6 billion representing 10 per cent of the total investment cost. The government intends to leverage private capital to finance the remaining 90 per cent of funding requirements," he said.

According to the new bill, the ten per cent investment contribution of the Government would be monies allocated from the budget programmes of the Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies over the period for the development of the Hub.

The government will be re-

sponsible for the provision of the initial basic infrastructure like the acquisition of the land, payment of compensation and resettlement of affected communities, preparation of the spatial plan, construction of a railway and road network and the provision of social amenities including water and electricity.

For a smooth implementation of the project, the Petroleum and Petrochemicals Hub would be designated

Ghana is estimated to earn about US\$1.56 billion in export tax, 130% increase in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through injection of US\$60 billion into the country's economy by the year 2030 while the project is expected to provide the country Liquified Natural Gas facilities for power production and drive the growth of various industries including petrochemicals.

The project is expected to create some 780,000 direct and indirect jobs.

**The Petroleum and Petrochemicals Hub would be engaged in the supply of petroleum and petrochemical products to satisfy the demands of the domestic market and the West African sub-regional market. This project is expected to lead to an increase in the presence of major international oil trading and storage companies while encouraging public-private partnerships and joint ventures between local companies and international companies.**

## Elections

# GAMBIA: IEC Announces Niamina West, Kerr Karga By-Elections Slated For November 7th

**By Aji Fatou Faal**

The Independent Electoral Commission yesterday has announced the much awaiting National Assembly By-Elections for the Niamina West Constituency in the Central River Region and Kerr Karga Ward in the Kerewan Area Council which is slated for November 7th 2020.

The announcement was made during a press conference held at the IEC Headquarters at the Bertil Harding Highway, Bakau.

Due to the demise of Hon. Demba Sowe, who was elected in 2017 as the National As-

sembly Member For Niamina West after he won the Legislative elections under the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC) ticket.

He passed away in Casablanca, Morocco on 24th January 2020 on a private mission. Alhaji Momar Njai, Chairman of Independent Electoral Commission has urged the electorate to be very vigilant and comply with World Health Organization (WHO) rules and regulations.

He further said that IEC would only provide hand sanitizers and also check their temperature while emphasising that voters who don't wear face mask would not be allowed to cast their votes.

Njai revealed that the By-Elections which was supposed to



Honorable Peter Musa Moigua representing constituency 011, Kenema District

be in April 16th 2020 could not be realised due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Meanwhile, Yerro Jallow is the aspirant candidate under

the GPP ticket while the National People's Party are yet to disclose their candidate. The Nomination of the candidates is scheduled for 24th October 2020.

Enterprise Group. At least, we know that the Minister of Finance, Mr Ken Ofori-Atta, and cousin of President Nana Addo is a beneficiary owner of the Enterprise Group.

This is because we have a President who touted that he was not coming to public service to enrich himself or family but he is doing the exact opposite.

At a time that Ghanaians and their companies are struggling due to COVID-19, our President did not find it necessary to, at least, open up to other companies in the insurance industry through a competitive bidding process.

All the President did is to hand-pick his cousin's company and doled out GH¢10 million-plus under the cover of insurance premium for health workers", the Tamale South MP said.

## GHANA: Minority Questions Legality Of COVID-19 Testing Contract At Airport

**Continued from Page 4**

much reasonable and cheaper fee? Why would the Nana Addo-led NPP Government cleverly conjure a scheme to exploit innocent Ghanaian passengers? If you want due diligence and proper work being done, you award a contract to a company which has no laboratory and yet they will depend on another laboratory to undertake the exercise. It only can be a matter of rewarding a friend," he added.

President Akufo Addo in his 16th national address on measures taken to control the spread of the Coronavirus on Sunday, August 30 opened, open the Kotoka International Aiport (KIA) for in-

ternational flights.

"Fellow Ghanaians, I am glad to announce that Kotoka International Airport will reopen and resume operations from Tuesday, September 1, 2020. This decision has been communicated to all international airlines," the President said.

The President also announced that some stringent measures that have been put in place at the airport to prevent the importation of new Coronavirus cases into the country. The President said the measures include a requirement for every passenger to possess proof of a negative PCR Coronavirus test from an accredited laboratory on arrival at the KIA.

"The test should have been done not more than 72 hours before the scheduled departure from the country of origin. All airlines have been instructed to ensure compliance with this directive for all passengers wishing to travel to Ghana and those airlines who fail in this regard would be sanctioned".

The minority also raised concerns about the insurance package announced by the president for all frontline health workers, alleging that the Insurance Company selected to see to the issuance of the packages did not go through any procurement process.

"We all know the faces behind

## Privileges and Ethics

# SIERRA LEONE: FEUD OVER FGM AND ALLEGED VERBAL ATTACK MPS TO FACE ETHICS COMMITTEE

**"Immediately I was mad, I threw my plate away, I shouted and said to him until the police intervened, I am not going to let you go free because even your daughter you cannot talk to like that let alone someone as old as your mother, ...."**

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

Two out of four lawmakers are set to face the Parliamentary Committee of Privileges and Ethics for alleged verbal and written insults meted out on two female Members of Parliament (MPs), Leader of Government Business Honorable Mathew Sarh Nyuma announced on the first plenary sitting after the third session recess of the Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone held on 23rd October 2020.

One of the alleged victims of insult, the only and first independent female MP representing constituency 001 Kailahun District Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi said that the Hon. Momoh Bockarie representing constituency 012 Kenema District, Sierra Leone Peoples Party (SLPP) owes her and the women of Sierra Leone an apology for using foul language against her in a seminar

over a bitter disagreement that they had over the issue of banning Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), a common practice in the Bondo female secret society in Sierra Leone.

Hon. Tongi in an exclusive interview with *Parliamentary News (PN)* narrated her ordeal with the male MP, the decision of parliament to summon him before the Committee on Privileges and Ethics and other gender-based issues.

"This is the most unexpected, shameful and disgraceful thing that has ever happened to me. We were in Bo District to discuss the issue of FGM and the Bondo female secret society, a lot of people were in favour while others were against during a roundtable discussion over lunch. In a friendly atmosphere, we were discussing the restrictions on African kids in Europe being forbidden from FGM and then the Hon. Momoh Bockarie an antagonist, stood up and said that he has also been to Europe and knows what obtains there too," Hon. Tongi said. She furthered that said she softly disagreed with the MP that he has not even gone to the Lungi international airport lest to talk about going to Europe during which Hon. Momoh allegedly stood up and used an unprintable language against her manner of going to Europe.

"Immediately I was mad, I threw my plate away, I shouted and said to him until the police intervened, I am not going to let you go free because even your daughter you cannot talk to like that let alone someone as old as your mother, somebody's mother and wife. I said to him that you are an honourable Member of Parliament, you should treat each other honourably," she said, echoing that there was a strong disagreement on why FGM should be stopped or not in Sierra Leone.

Apparently, on the 23rd October 2020, the House committed the issue of Hon. Bockarie and three others to the Committee on Privileges and Ethics with Mr Speaker Hon. Dr Abass Chernor Bundu announcing the stripping of Hon. Momoh Bockarie and Hon. Billoh Shaw off their honourable titles, a decision that was controversial and arguable according to the submissions of the main Opposition Leader Hon. Chernor R. Bah and that of the Deputy Speaker Hon. Solomon S. Thomas both of whom called for its rescinding, a prayer that the Speaker held a reservation on.

On the subject of why she thinks FGM should be abhorred as been pinpointed by Western-backed civil society organizations, Hon. Tongi said: "I am in favour of Bondo but not the cutting of the genitalia," adding that, "Bondo can happen without any cutting because it offers other trainings for girls and women."

When told that there is what is called medical cutting of female genitals even in the West, Hon. Tongi disagreed, saying that "it is not possible, if they go and solicit it, it means that they are having problems with their genitals." She said that it is a matter of one's right to her body but that should be

done with the consent of an initiate that is above eighteen years of age.

"I have problems with the initiation of babies and underage girls, it leads to death sometimes," Hon. Tongi said.

She also expressed support for the House Leadership's decision to strip off the titles of Hon. Bockarie and Hon. Shaw and their referral to the Ethics Committee noting that "with such an insult the decision taking is not even enough for me. If any man can stand up and look at a woman and insult her, then that MP is not fit to be called a man or honourable."

She said the stripping off of the honourable title from the two MPs was not as important to her as to that of the insults.

"I am a mother and a patriot, Hon. Bockarie has done something that is wrong. He is going to be punished and spoken to and then all we need is probably an apology. For me, he is a kid, I treat him and everybody like a son or a brother. He did a mistake that has to be corrected but we cannot kill him just because of that, we cannot kill his career just because of that, he has a long way to go," Hon. Tongi said

Critics of the Hon. Momoh and colleague who are facing charges of gender-based violence said that they have already shattered their political support base among feminist and women, perceiving them as bullies of women at a time that the Government is intensifying its war on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) but Hon. Tongi said that the two men deserve whatever that might befall them.

"Yes the Leadership delayed, probably because of the luke-



Hon. Emilia Lolloh Tongi

**Continued from Page 13**

## Corruption

# GHANA: CORRUPTION NOW FELONY AS PARLIAMENT AMENDS CRIMINAL OFFENCES BILL

By: Emmanuella Dadugbor

**P**arliament has passed the Criminal Offences (Amendment) Bill 2020 which categorizes acts of corruption as a felony. This means that corrupt practices will no longer be seen as misdemeanours under the law but a crime punishable by a jail term not less than 12 years and not more than 25 years.

The amendment is to ensure stiffer punishment for corrupt officials to deter others from all forms of corrupt practices.

Under the parent Act, the Criminal Offences Act, 1960, (Act 29), corruption is a misdemeanour and the associated punishment – a jail term of between two and five years – according to the sponsor of the bill, the Ministry of Justice, does not deter people enough.

**"The passage of the bill will strengthen the anti-corruption regime in the country and will lead Ghana's international commitment in the fight against corruption"**

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Gloria Akuffo during the Third Reading of the Amendment Bill bemoaned the many disadvantages of corruption on the progress of the nation adding that the act also delays infrastructural and social development.

"In recent times, Ghana has experienced a spate of corruption cases associated with persons holding public office. These cases have dire consequences on the economic development as well as the international image of the country," she noted.

Madam Gloria Akuffo also noted that the previous description of corruption as misdemeanours is inconsistent with the many international statutes that criminalise corruption which Ghana is a signatory to.

"The passage of the bill will strengthen the anti-corruption regime in the country and will lead Ghana's international commitment in the fight against corruption"

Ranking Member on the Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs Committee, Inusah Fuseini, commenting on the motion, said the new measure sends a strong message to members of the public and will deter persons who may contemplate engaging in corruption.

"This thing is enhancing sensitivities and is changing misdemeanour into felonies and some of these things will qualify into the realm of the special prosecutors because there is that law. Per that law, we did not put some of the things here. But right now, I would have wished that a lot more people, particularly those of us who are in the field now today, understand it because it also talks about corrupting of voters," he said.

The Tamale Central MP also said



Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Gloria Akuffo

it is important that as the country draws near to the polls, politicians do not find themselves in acts of corruption that may push them to the wrong side of the law.

"I think also that we have to be conversant with all these things and so I support this but I wanted a larger chamber full of members who will understand the implication of what we are doing. Criminal legislation will always require a number of people to be aware of what we are doing otherwise some people when they hear this may not understand the impact. Of course, we all know that we have signed onto convictions and requires us to make sure our laws comply with them but there are very serious issues removing misdemeanours and making them felonies."

Member of Parliament for Wa West Joseph Yileh Chireh commenting on the motion, expressed concern about the low turn of MPs in the House when the bill was passed. He also noted that it requires legislation to make corruption a felony because of the gravity of that offence because it has been admitted that, corruption deprives or denies a nation of the required resources for development.

"So persons who engage in cor-

ruption must be punished in a way that serves as a deterrent to others and makes them face heavy sentences for them to know that corruption is a high risk. It is thought and believed that corruption is not acceptable and this is one of the reasons why our fight against corruption is succeeding. The intention of this amendment is to ensure that corruption becomes an offence so we support to send a message that even we as politicians are changing the sanction regime to make corruption high-risk activities," he said.

Mr Yileh Chireh said "by engaging in the amendment the message must be clear to all of us that Parliament has taken the decision that a person can go to jail for corruption for a period not less than 12 years and not more than 25 years. And that must be clear to all of us politicians and public officials and trusted with the responsibility of protecting the public first. So I support the attempt by the attorney general to have this sanction regime in the criminal and other offences act amended to reflect our commitment under the international law."

The bill was laid before the house for amendment by the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice in June this year.

## Water Resources, Works and Housing

# GHANA: Eighty-One Million Euros Sekondi-Takoradi Water Project Gets Approval

By Emmanuella Dadugblor

**A**n over eighty-one Million Euro loan agreement for the financing of the Sekondi-Takoradi Water Supply Rehabilitation and Expansion Project has been given parliamentary approval. The facility is a two-part loan agreement between Ghana represented by the Ministry of Finance and Commerzbank Aktingesellschaft.

The first is an Oeke-Backed agreement amounting to €70,733,432 while the second, a commercial loan amounting to €10,500,000 is to fund the implementation of the project. Details of the project as given by the Chairman of the Finance Committee of Parliament, Dr Mark Assibey Yeboah in his committee's report on the project include the construction of an intake, a new water treatment plant with its ancillary structure, transmission and distribution pipelines, service reservoirs, standpipes and

house connection.

When completed, the project is expected to increase agriculture production, and boost the commercial potential of the twin-city, as well a more respectable front to visitors arriving from neighbouring countries.

Residents of Takoradi, Effia-kuma, Kwesimintsim, Kokrom, West Tanokrom, Anaji, Sekondi, New Takoradi, Essikado, Apremdu, Keikum, Ntankoful, Nggyiresia, East Tanokrom, Effia Village and Fijai will be the primary beneficiaries of the project which is expected to be completed within 40 months from the day of commencement with a Defect Liability Period of 12 months from substantial completion of works.

Other beneficiary communities are Assakai, Aduembra, Kansaworodo, Nkroful, Anoadze, Abuesi, Apowa, Inchaban, Ketan, Dixcove, Estates, Shama, Hwendo, Hotopo and surrounding villages.

Dr Assibey-Yeboah, enumerating the benefits of the project on the floor of the house on Tuesday, October 20, 2020, said "the adequate supply of potable water would

lead to a reduction in the prevalence of water-borne diseases, enhance opportunities for agro-processing and businesses and generally improve the social well-being of the people in the project area.

According to the report, the water project will also boost the country's chances of attaining Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 by the end of 2030.

"It would also aid and improve on the services of health facilities;" improve economic activities, create jobs in the catchment area and contribute to the achievement of the policy of the Government of Ghana of ensuring access to safe potable water by the year 2030 in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 6".

Supporting the motion, MP for Adaklu, Hon Governs Kwame Agbodza questioned why the treatment plant from the project can only process only 100,000 cubic meters a day although a raw water intake of about 230,000 cubic meters will be constructed, leaving a deficit of over 130,000 cubic meters which will not be treated. He said the project is disadvan-

taged in this regard unless there is a possibility of a second phase to cater for the deficit generated.

He also said the details of the project did not capture when the nation should address the shortfall in the supply of water, though it stated the projected increase in population which will require over 200,000 cubic meters of water by 2040.

He, however, said the project is laudable as many people will get clean and potable water as it reduces the spate of diseases as well as the government's budget on the treatment of waterborne infections.



Chairman of the Finance Committee of Parliament, Dr Mark Assibey Yeboah

**When completed, the project is expected to increase agriculture production, and boost the commercial potential of the twin-city, as well a more respectable front to visitors arriving from neighbouring countries.**



## Energy and Extractives

# GAMBIA: N/A JOINT COMMITTEE DISCUSS PETROLEUM COMMISSION BILL 2020

By: By Aji Fatou Faal

The National Assembly Joint Committee on Public Enterprise Committee (PEC) and Environment yesterday discussed with the Ministries of Finance and Economic Affairs and Petroleum on the Petroleum Commission Bill 2020.

The discussion was meant to seek the opinions of the staff regarding the Petroleum Commission Bill 2020.

Hon. Fafa Sanyang, Minister for Petroleum, who led the delegation before the Parliamentarians at the plenary for legislative scrutiny, consideration and final adoption by the joint committees.

It could be recalled that the Ministries of Petroleum and Finance were requested by the joint committees on Public Enterprises and Environment to have their inputs on the bill which the joint committee would report to the plenary after the engagement.

Hon. Halifa Sallah, National Assembly Member for Serekunda and Co-Chair of the Joint Committee said that the discussion on the bill was assigned to the joint committee for scrutiny and they have dealt with the inter-

pretation and moved to the establishment of the Petroleum Commission and its governing board.

"As we proceed, we could see some contradictions such as the appointment of the board members, in consultation with the Minister, was seen to be in contravention of section 175 of the constitution which calls for appointment of board members by the President in consultation with the public service commission", he revealed.

He said that since they are in the process of scrutinizing the bill and gauging it against the provision of the constitution which is also a Parent Act of the Public Enterprises Act, they thought it wise to reach out to the Ministry since they have already submitted to the Assembly a State Owned Enterprises Bill 2020.

According to him, they were concerned that if they proceed with this bill, based on the Public Enterprises Act of 1990 only to have to consider state owned enterprises bill, which may contain provisions that may not necessarily be a simple replica of the 1990 Act that they would not be doing justice to their work.

Hon. Sallah averred that this is the reason for engaging the min-

**"As we proceed, we could see some contradictions such as the appointment of the board members, in consultation with the Minister, was seen to be in contravention of section 175 of the constitution which calls for appointment of board members by the President in consultation with the public service commission"**



National Assembly Joint Committee on Public Enterprise Committee

istries, in the scrutiny exercise of the petroleum commission bill to hear their opinions from the Ministry regarding an act which may come, so that they could anticipate how to prevent flouting the current 1997 constitution, as well as not disregarding what may come as a Parent Act.

Lamin Fatty, Acting Director Public Private Partnership (PPP) at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs said the his Ministry is mandated to exercise oversight on the enterprises as the funds belong to the public as such they are currently advocating for 'value for money and strong prudent public finance management', which is pushing them to have the commission in place.

He noted that the key requisite for the commission to exist is to have a public finance Act dubbed SOE Act (State Owned Enterprise Act), and as a result they have hired a consultant from the World Bank, who is working with the Ministry of Finance on PPP and SOE to come up with a draft bill.

"Unfortunately, this bill is still pending at the Assembly for approval. We have also presented the bill before the Cabinet and have secured the approval and next stage is to take it to justice for legal review and advice and

formally submit it to the National Assembly for consideration".

Fatty lamented that they are trying to go in line with the draft constitution and there are some clauses in the new SOE Bill that are in line with their opinion that they put into the draft constitution which was rejected. That also has a direct bearing on the progress that they are supposed to have on the approval of the current SOE Bill.

He said that the alternative is either to go back and redo it and align it with the current constitution, which is not their objective or to go in tandem with the draft new constitution that they are working on.

He then revealed the bill must be anchored key to which is the constitution itself, which if not passed whatever they have and aligned it to then it would still not be fruitful.

Lamin Camara, Permanent Secretary at Ministry of Finance said that the way forward at the moment is to see how the relevant sections of the 1997 constitution is amended to be in line with the new SOE Bill, following the rejection of the new draft constitution".

The session was adjourned till further notice.

## Water Resources, Works and Housing

# SIERRA LEONE WILL BE A WORKS YARD - HON. BASHIRU SILIKIE

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

In a preliminary appraisal, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Works and Public Assets, Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, Honorable Bashiru Silikie has said that he is generally pleased with the progress of roads and bridges construction currently taking place in the country adding that with the recent awarding of forty new contracts, he is sure that the country is to become a works yard in the coming weeks and months.

"I think Government is very willing, we have just awarded forty contracts to contractors and in the next few weeks and months, I believe that Sierra Leone will be a works yard because when forty contractors work all over the country, then you know that Sierra Leone is going to be a works yard," Hon. Silikie told *Parliamentary News (PN)*.

Hon. Silikie who also doubles as the Deputy Leader of Government Business was speaking in an interview PN following a five-day oversight visit on the Wellington-Massiaka, Mabang and Magbele Bridges, Moyamba -Bo, Mattru, Bandajuma -Puje-

hun, Mano River Bridge, Bo-Kenema township roads, Pendembu-Kailahun, Kenema-Kono and Port Loko ongoing road construction projects.

According to Hon. Silikie, it is his general impression after visiting some parts of the country to look at roads that, "some of the projects were impressive and of course some of them have to step up and were challenging."

He said: "But generally, my impression on some of the works was relatively good. I was impressed with some contractors, there were delay issues, payments to contractors, scope of work, some areas need to be changed or are still being looked into, some of them because of the terrain being challenging, but all put together, I think I was a little bit impressed."

The Works and Public Assets Committee Chairman, Hon. Silikie during the field visits raised concerns about some contractors not doing precise feasibility studies before commencing full-blown construction works due to claims being made, Hon. Silikie said, "I am not an engineer to tell whether some of the issues raised were justifiable but based on what we saw on the ground and what was presented to us, they tried very hard to defend themselves. We raised concerns, which is part of our oversight responsibility to ask questions. Basically, what they explained to us was understandable. Some of them have to be followed up with their superiors here in Freetown and we will have to ask questions again to be fully briefed on what is happening to be convinced so that we report to Government. Relatively, I think some of the reasons advanced were taken in good fate but we need to do a thorough probing when they come to meet us here in Parliament."

Some of the contractors namely CSE, CRSG, SALCOST, etc all cited delays in the timely completion of contracts due to the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and

**"I think our Government need to do more, but so far the projects we are doing are satisfactory. I think Government is very willing, we have just awarded forty contracts to contractors and in the next few weeks and months, I believe that Sierra Leone will be a works yard ..."**

Hon. Silikie said this cannot be escaped because it is a global outbreak.

"But we told them COVID-19 should not be an excuse because it is now very clear that we are going to live with COVID-19 and that should not stop the activities of road work," Hon. Silikie said.

Giving a general appraisal on the status of road infrastructure projects currently being undertaken by the Government of Sierra Leone, Hon. Silikie said: "I think our Government need to do more, but so far the projects we are doing are satisfactory. I think Government is very willing, we have just awarded forty contracts to contractors and in the next few weeks and months, I believe that Sierra Leone will be a works yard because when forty contractors work all over the country, then you know that Sierra Leone is going to be a works yard and the people will be pleased."

He said that the Government is

challenged for the fact that education is its priority with twenty-two per cent of the country's GDP being injected, "but again, Government taking into cognizance the responsibilities has decided to invest in roads and these are challenging but projects that the people want to see and so far, I am very impressed with the willingness on the part of the Government."

The Sierra Leone Roads Authority (SLRA) is the institution charged with the duty of managing roads but many a time its technical and other capacities have been questioned whenever substandard roads are done by bad contractors.

Hon. Silikie said: "We have gone and we have seen and to answer whether the SLRA is doing due diligence, will be based on questions and follow-up on the SLRA itself. For now, it is very early to make a prediction on whether they are doing good or bad, but when we come we will ask the right questions and reach a conclusion."



Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Works and Public Assets, Fifth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone, Honorable Bashiru Silikie

## Privileges and Ethics

# SIERRA LEONE: FEUD OVER FGM AND ALLEGED VERBAL ATTACK MPS TO FACE ETHICS COMMITTEE

**Continued From Page 8**

warm attitude, we waited over five months, they should have acted earlier than today but nevertheless, it has happened and that is the most important thing," Hon. Tongi said.

On the other side of the story, Hon. Momoh Bockarie said that it was Hon. Tongi that first insulted him spiting her sisters calling them slay queens. He recounted that it was true that they had a serious argument on the issue of FGM since it is a traditional issue that is deep in the hearts and minds of his constituents who are mostly traditionalists.

"There was an organization that took us to Bo District on a two-day closed-door seminar on parliament supporting them to do away with the Bondo Secret Society, but some of us know where we came from and it is the culture of our people, so we vehemently disfavored the notion. An argument erupted between Hon. Tongi and myself. She was in support of the banning of Bondo, to the point that she said

why are our people involving in the Bondo practice, was as a result of poverty and hunger. I said no, you are missing the point, this is the culture of our people, you cannot say Bondo is what our people depend on for their living," Hon. Momoh said.

Hon. Bockarie said that he told Hon. Tongi that they are only trying to kill the African culture for that of Western notions, wherein in Europe, men are being changed to women and the other way round, adding that tattoo, same-sex, etc are all bad practices which the West are in support of but only to pick on Bondo, noting that if this is to be done, male circumcision is also to be stopped because it involved the cutting and removal of a body part which forms part of cruelty. Hon. Momoh said, Hon. Tongi told him that where she came from in Europe, her pension is heavier than his salary and in response, he asked her why did she leave to come to compete for same meagre salary in Sierra Leone.

"I told her that her being in European was an opportunity because it was a man that took her there, I do not know what came into her mind, then she replied that if I feel that how my sisters are layabouts that is how she is like, I said that it is not my sisters she was referring to but herself. Yes, I said it after she said it to me first. She said that her husband and herself have been to Europe and travelled to many other countries and I said it was an opportunity given to her by a man, she referred it to my sisters and I also reverted it to her too. This is what happened in February, I cannot remember the organization's name but it is was Western-based and operated along with a Kenyan lady. It was a closed-door meeting," Hon. Momoh said.

Hon. Momoh said that the Leadership's referral of this

matter to the Ethics Committee is not anything bad, " but the only thing that the Leadership did that was wrong is that Section No. 99 of the 1991 Constitution has been abrogated, because the session in which the incident occurred has elapsed, that is when they should have referred the matter to the Ethics Committee but in this case, we are talking about another session. This happened during the second session and now we are in the third session."

He said that the matter in his view was laid to rest after the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Female Caucus Hon. Veronica Kadie Sesay raised the issue and Speaker deliberated on it without then naming names.

"I am so surprised why they came up with this matter again, that is something I do not know and I don't really know what they want to achieve or why," Hon. Bockarie said.

"I am confident about having a fair hearing before the Committee on Privileges and Ethics," he said but deflected on what if the Committee resolved that he must apologize at the bar of the whole House.

"If they ask me to apologize, then it will be on what basis. Except if they want to tell me that Hon. Lolloh, being an MP have a license to insult my sisters in saying that they are layabouts after I told her that she was giving an opportunity to travel Europe and the globe by a man, her husband. Except the Committee wants to say that she is right in abusing my sisters. We have always been in good terms. I have always known her to be a soft person. It was really a surprise to hear her utter that statement," Hon. Bockarie said adding that Hon. Tongi was even scorned by other MPs when she compared her pen-



Honourable Momoh Bockarie

sion to salaries of MPs, that was in itself un-parliamentary.

"It is Hon. Lolloh that needs to apologize to our people because I was in defence of the culture of our people which they hold on to as women. I am sent to defend the issues of my people. I will defend them with all my strength, spirit and blood. If she wants Bondo to be removed, let her go to her own constituency but let her don't bring it to my people. This is what transpired, but because of the sensitivity of the issue of Bondo being a no-go area for our local people, I kept quiet. In fact, while we were at the session, the nature of the deliberations were leaked and we received messages that the women were about to storm the session saying that there are too many serious issues to address that are shelved only for us to meet secretly on Bondo issue. I am not mad to look at Hon. Lolloh to tell her about being a lay-about, I only reverted and told her that it is her way of life of what she referred to my sisters. I was surprised at her ranting, we used to joke," Hon. Bockarie said.

However, the House' Privileges and Ethics Committee is expected to commence the holding of public hearings to look into the said and other matters being referred to it by the Leadership of Parliament

**"It is Hon. Lolloh that needs to apologize to our people because I was in defence of the culture of our people which they hold on to as women. I am sent to defend the issues of my people. I will defend them with all my strength, spirit and blood. ...."**

## Parliamentary Practice & Procedures

# LAST WEEK IN GHANA'S PARLIAMENT

By: Benjamin Opoku Aryeh

The Minority Caucus in Parliament has given an indication, through the Leader of the Caucus that they have plans of introducing a bill to Parliament that will establish a Commission for Presidential Debate in the country. For the past week also, the House has been on the beat considering several bills on the floor hoping to pass them before going on recess. Some of the bills included the Real Estate Agency Bill and the Council of State Bills.

#### Bills

The House is moving at a quick pace to pass some bills that have been scheduled for the Meeting.

The Deputy Minister of Finance, Mrs Abena Osei-Asare, withdrew the Insurance Bill, 2020

which was presented on 3 August 2020, and re-laid after which it was referred to the Committee on Finance for consideration and report. In addition to that, the Ghana Assets Corporation Bill, 2020, and Creative Arts Industry Bill, 2020 were all presented for the first time and referred to the appropriate Committees for consideration and report.

The Petroleum Hub Development Bill was passed during the week, while the committee report of the Institute of Chartered Accountant Ghana, Bill was presented to the floor. Also, the Ghana Enterprises Agency Bill, 2020 was laid by the Minister for Trade and Industry for first reading and referred accordingly to the Committee on Trade and Industry for its consideration.

#### Papers

The Finance Committee presented the following reports to the House.

Report on the request for waiver of Import Duties, Import and Domestic VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Ten Million, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty-Eight Euros and Ten Cents (€10,879,228.10) on materials, equipment, and services to be procured for the construction of five (5) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centres of Excellence; and Report on the request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of One Million, One Hundred and Twelve Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty-One United States Dollars (US\$1,112,451.00) for China Gansu International Corporation for Economic and Technical Cooperation and Seven Hundred and Twenty-Six Thousand, Three Hundred and Forty-One United States Dollars (US\$726,341.00) for China Railway Major Bridge on materials, equipment and works to be procured for the implementation of the Accra Intelligent Traffic Management Project under the Tranche B Facility Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and China Development Bank (CDB).

The report on the request for waiver of Import Duties, Import and Domestic VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of Ten Million, Eight Hundred and Seventy-Nine Thousand, Two Hundred and Twenty-Eight Euros and Ten Cents (€10,879,228.10) on materials, equipment, and services to be procured for the construction of five (5) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Centres of Excellence; and Report on the request for waiver of Import Duties, Import VAT, GETFund Levy, NHIL, EXIM Levy and Special Import Levy amounting to the Ghana Cedi equivalent of One Million, One Hundred and Twelve Thousand, Four Hundred and Fifty-One United States Dollars (US\$1,112,451.00) for China Gansu International Corporation for Economic and Technical Cooperation and Seven Hundred and Twenty-Six Thousand, Three Hundred and Forty-One United States Dollars (US\$726,341.00) for China Railway Major Bridge on materials, equipment and works to be procured for the implementation of the Accra Intelligent Traffic Management Project under the Tranche B Facility Agreement between the Republic of Ghana and China Development Bank (CDB).

The report of the Committee on Employment, Social Welfare and State Enterprises on the Operations and Financial Statements of Selected State-Owned Enterprises for the Year 2018 was laid on the floor.

#### Committee

The Committee on Mines and Energy met and considered the 2019 and 2020 Mid-Year Operational and Financial Performance of Petroleum Commission. The committee on Gender and Children also met to discuss the draft Witchcraft Bill with reference to the Criminal Offences Act.

The Committee on Constitutional, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs also considered the Plant Variety Protection Bill, 2020.

#### Statement

The Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Hon. Frank Annor-Dompree made a statement to mark the anniversary of the 75 years of the United Nations.

#### The Week Ahead

The Minister for Finance is expected to present to the Parliament, on Wednesday, 28th October 2020, the Expenditure in Advance of Appropriation, January to March 2021 for the consideration of the House. MPs are expected to sit on Monday to be able to complete.



Ghana Parliament House

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## Education

# SIERRA LEONE: MP PROVIDES FIRST SCHOOL IN CENTURY-OLD MINING VILLAGE

By Melvin Tejan Mansaray

**H**onourable Saa Emerson Lamina Member of Parliament (MP) representing constituency 030 Koidu City, Kono District Coalition For Change (C4C) party has commissioned a three classroom block, staff office and toilet buildings for the century-old Faadu Village, Moindene Section, Gbense Chiefdom, Koidu City, Kono District, Eastern Sierra Leone.

The village which was gazette in the year 1910 is diamond-rich and has been mined almost to its knees with no educational, health or social amenities available.

It elders said that they have received numerous unfulfilled promises from mining companies, politicians and organizations recalling how people have drowned in the rivers during the raining seasons when the four rivers overflowed. The stakeholders, however, thanked Hon. Emerson Lamina for his contribution to the education sector, health and other sectors.

In an exclusive interview with *Parliamentary News (PN)*, Hon. Lamina said that the gesture came about with the support of his constituents, noting that, " I realize that the people gave me a job to represent them in parliament, and in giving back to society, I have commissioned a newly constructed school for the children of this village and other sections."

Since 1930, Kono District has been acclaimed for its rich mineral deposit

**"I realize that the people gave me a job to represent them in parliament, and in giving back to society, I have commissioned a newly constructed school for the children of this village and other sections."**

of diamonds, gold, etc, but observers said this natural wealth has not trickled down or reflected on the lives of the ordinary residents of this district compounded with serious environmental degradation.

Hon. Lamina said that the nexus between education and mining is one thing that needs a narrative change. For his people

"It is my understanding as a professional teacher that the greatest asset in this world is the human resource and the human capital can only be enriched through education. We understand that diamonds and gold in this district has not helped much but giving the children quality and free education which is the Government's flagship project, we believe that the narrative will be changed for generations yet unborn in this district," Hon. Lamina said.

On 23rd October 1992, the first gunshots of what was to be a decade-long civil war were fired in Kono district, Hon. Lamina said this date was deliberately selected for the commissioning of the school to also change the negative narration of the district's history.

He said that it is sad that many Sierra Leoneans do not preserve historic dates, adding, " this day is symbolic, it is worth commemorating, this is so because it was on this day in 1992 on the same Friday like today (23rd October 2020) that the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) fired the first gunshots in Koidu city, everybody had to flee. That showed the articles of destruction but we want to change this narrative to the instrument of development which is education."

Hon. Lamina said as a teenager he was abducted and inducted for three days by the rebels but through a miracle, he escaped.

"When I remember my experience of twenty-eight years ago, I see this day as symbolic, it is high time we begin to keep good historical records of our district to show the unborn generations what we went through," Hon. Lamina said, juxtaposing the date to that of the April 7 Rwanda genocide day observance adding that, " we want the kids to remember the bad history of this day, that is why we slated this date for the commissioning of Kono Heritage Academy Primary School with the motto in the local dialect meaning, ' education is the light.'

"We want to bring light to this deprived community, where children used to walk on foot two and half miles every day to access education at the main Koidu City. This place was deprived but we have today brought in education. We hope that with the support of the people of this chiefdom, people that assisted me from the private sector, mining companies, individuals, will see a reason to construct a secondary school also," Hon. Lamina said.

A whooping Two Hundred and Ninety Million Leones is estimated to be the cost of the construction and furnishing of the Kono Heritage Academy Primary School, money that Hon. Lamina said he raised from his allowances, salaries he sacrificed as MP well-wishers in the private and corporate sector who donated in cash or kind.

"I want to appreciate and congratulate all of them for making this commissioning a possible thing," Hon. Lamina said, noting that the management of the school is something of serious concern now.

"Definitely this is a community school, at the moment, it will surprise you to learn that I will be paying teachers salaries, subsidy, etc. I am further appealing to the Government of Sierra Leone to assist, this is for the community not for private. It is a free gift to the children of Faadu village. I implore the Government of Sierra Leone to give pin codes to the teachers and also approve this school so that the burden will be relieved on my poor salary. I call on the Government to take care of the teachers salaries because this is a development for nation-building," Hon. Lamina said

Lawmakers have three traditional roles of lawmaking, oversight and representation but in Sierra Leone like many other places, there is a fourth mandate, which is addressing the physical, material, financial and social needs of their voters. This notion has been a topic of debate with some legislators arguing that it is not their mandate to construct schools, hospitals, roads, etc.

According to Hon. Lamina, " Section No.97 of the Sierra Leone Constitution provides that MPs must not alienate themselves from their people, this to me means, we should be identifying with our constituents, it is only when we identify with them, we will know their felt needs. When I identified with the people



Hon. Saa Emerson Lamina

here, they told me that there felt need is education for a deprived community. Through Fatmata Sow, a native of this village, who pointed out their constraint and today her dream has come to past."

He thanked the zonal leaders of the constituency including Tamaba Agibu Konneh chairman, the Councilors, Mayor and all like-minded thinkers for the realization of the dream for a school.

Professor Aiah Gbakima Minister of Technical and Higher Education who also is a descendant of the District on behalf of President Julius Maada Bio and Minister of Basic Education David Sengeh pledged the Government's support for the school, noting that work is also in progress to have the first-ever science and technology university in the district.

Several stakeholders in the private and public sectors pledged support and commitment to ensure that the newly commissioned school serves its purpose, while another stakeholder appealed for the construction of water well for the school.

Sorie Mansaray acting Head Teacher of the Kono Heritage Primary School said that he felt happy to witness such a historic event, adding that, " I have nine teachers presently with an ongoing admission for some over one hundred and seventy pupils." He said that he intends to manage the school for a better result citing that it is very difficult to have teachers to come to the village to teach urging that the Government also approved the school.

" My message to the Government is that I want them to focus on us by approving this school and the staff as well for a smooth running of the affairs of this school and its pupils," Mansaray said.

Kono district remains a hot political battleground for the APC and SLPP political parties but the advent of the C4C party has caused a paradigm shift in the voting pattern with Hon. Lamina being the third force leader with eight seats in the legislature.

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