

## **Deputy Energy Minister Commissions Rokupr Mini Grid, Describes Electricity as Critical Driver of National Development**

By:Austine Luseni

Rokupr, Kambia District, Northwestern Sierra Leone, Friday April 29, 2022

Deputy Minister of Energy, Dr. Eldred Taylor, has described electricity as a critical driver of national development and reiterated the commitment of President Julius Maada Bio to increasing access to energy at the commissioning ceremony of a mini grid facility at Rokupr, Kambia district, Northwestern Sierra Leone.

Receiving the Deputy Minister and his entourage, Paramount Chief of Magbema Chiefdom, PC Bai Farama Tass Bubu Ngbnak IV, described the occasion as a historic one, noting that Rokupr had gone without electricity for over 25 years.

He said Rokupr was an agribusiness hub, with farming, fishing and trade being hallmark economic features of the lives of the people, adding that the provision of electricity was going to positively impact petty trading, the preservation of fish and the milling of husk rice.

While commissioning the mini grid, Dr. Eldred Taylor said before 2018, only 15% of Sierra Leoneans had access to electricity, stressing further that access to electricity was now at 31% as per the December 2021 Proportion.

Dr. Taylor described President Bio as a service and delivery-focused president who was committed to breaking new grounds and setting astonishing records as evidenced in the electrification of Rokupr after a 25-year wait.

He went on to say that a detailed study had been completed with support from the United States of America, noting that that project would provide mini grids for towns in Kambia district like Gbonkomaria and Magbema in Magbema chiefdom and Kassirie and Mataysor in Samu chiefdom.

The Deputy Minister of Energy said the facility was one of the biggest in the country, with a capacity standing at 90kw peak and which was more than capable of addressing the electricity needs of several households and businesses.

He concluded by speaking on the Public Private Partnership model which he lauded. He praised the community people for their support to the project in terms of the provision of labour and appealed to beneficiaries to own the project.

Resident Minister Northwest, Hon. Alpha Khan, thanked the Deputy Minister of Energy and his entourage and praised President Bio for taking development to every part of the country, citing the Free Quality Education flagship program as the principal reason for his decision to work with President Bio and for Sierra Leone.

Member of Parliament for Constituency 060, Hon. Bai Sama, couldn't hide his joy, saying that the facility was going to give his constituency a massive facelift.

Earlier on, Deputy Secretary at the Ministry of Energy, Emmanuel Junisa, introduced the dignitaries and informed the gathering about the purpose and significance of the ceremony.