



Statement delivered by His Excellency, Julius Maada Bio, President at the Republic of Sierra Leone at the Launch of the Ahmad Tejan Kabbah Foundation. Freetown, Sunday, 16 June 2019.

Your Excellences,

Dignitaries present,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Fellow Sierra Leoneans.

Today, we celebrate the life and legacy of a worthy citizen, our former President: **a man of great faith and courage who remained passionate about fostering a culture of peace and building enduring institutions; a man whose humility, simplicity, and dedication to service and nation will forever live on.**

I am grateful that as President of Sierra Leone, I am today tasked with the singular honour of launching the Ahmed Tejan Kabbah Foundation with its objective of promoting peaceful coexistence, cohesion, tolerance, respect, and justice.

In his own words, he appealed to the best in us as Sierra Leoneans. **In his inaugural statement, he adjured Sierra Leoneans to ensure that all their actions as rulers and the ruled be directed at sustaining the best interests of our country, Sierra Leone.** He said

It is my hope that our joint efforts and actions will be framed solely in the best interest of the people of Sierra Leone. I trust that in my duties of governing, you and I may count not only on the cooperation of elected members of all parties in our new Parliament, but our press, professional bodies, and other national institutions.

The national best interests are served not when elected members of parliament withdraw cooperation or when professional bodies and parts of the press flaunt open partisanship but in their “informed, persistent, and constructive criticisms as well as advice and encouragement.”

Every part of governance is as important as the whole because our unity, our shared values, and our shared sense of service to nation in spite of our pluralities make our nation better and stronger. As I said recently, let us embrace the ties that bind us as a nation and not those things that blind us to our primary duty to nation.

President Tejan Kabbah cautioned against the real danger that persons may take advantage of the “tyranny of ignorance, superstition, disease, violence, and poverty.” He called on “everyone to start working immediately to make Sierra Leone what [. . .] God intended her to be: serene, secure, and prosperous.” It is this challenge and vision of Sierra Leone that we must aspire toward with honesty and dedication, always.

In addition to appealing to our sense of unconditional patriotism, **President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was clear on the importance of building strong institutions as the key balusters of democracy and national development.**

He enjoined thus:

From the evidence of history, strong and successful nations have always been but on and nurtured by two fundamental prerequisites – the strength and efficiency of their national institutions, and more significantly, the patriotism of their citizens.

Institutions are only as resilient as we make them and that we must ensure that their integrity is not undermined by parochial interests or nepotism and naked partisanship.

President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah maintained:

I need not remind you that this is your Government: its institutions are your institutions, and its resources are your resources. They are yours to use, yours to enjoy and yours to protect against abuse, wastage, or misappropriation.

As leaders and citizens, we have a duty of care to manage the nation's resources well. We also have a duty of candour to admit when we get it all wrong, apologise, and make amends. That is good citizenship. That is good leadership.

President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah sought to inspire by often highlighting legacies of good governance and efficiency.

His legacy lives on in his preferred pathway of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and respecting the rights of citizens.

The Human Rights Commission and the Political Parties Registration Commission continue to protect citizen rights and guarantee participation in free democratic spaces.

His legacy lives on in legal and social protections for children, women, the poor, the disabled, and pensioners.

His legacy lives on in initiating the Anti-Corruption Act and insisting on accountability and transparency in public service.

His legacy lives on in decentralisation and local government.

His legacy lives on in extensive civil service reform.

His legacy lives on in judicial, legal, and security sector reforms.

His legacy lives on in institutional reforms from the first ever national youth policy to NASSIT, NACSA, NRA and more.

His legacy lives on in the funding his government secured for the Kenema-Koindu road,

the Makeni-Matotoka –Koidu road,

the Hillside road,
the Freetown peninsular road,
and the Freetown-Lungi airport road.

President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah retired gracefully from politics at the end of his term of office having led the country with diligence and integrity. His persistence demonstrated great courage and faith.

In his own words:

I moved Sierra Leone from the brink of state collapse and laid strong foundations for further nation building. The process has been tortuous and bumpy. Together, we encountered bottlenecks and some treacherous distractions but succeeded in getting Sierra Leone to where it is today – peaceful, democratic, hopeful, and better equipped to continue the struggle for stability and sustained development.

As Maya Angelou reminds us, “History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived; but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.” **So too do we abide as a nation in President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah’s work, legacy, and his hopes that “in the not too distant future, the nomenclature of a**

post-conflict country will disappear” and our country, Sierra Leone, will “graduate and earn a place among the most peaceful, stable, and developed countries in the world.”

This is what brings us together again today – to immortalise his legacy and to enshrine his vision as guiding principles in transforming our nation. With this, I now formally launch the President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah Foundation.