



**Statement by His Excellency, Dr. Julius
Maada Bio, President of the Republic of
Sierra Leone at the formal opening of
school facilities in Constituency 132.**

Juba, 16 September 2019

Courtesies

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, permit me to stand on all existing protocols:

I want to thank Honourable Ibrahim Tawa Conteh and the people of Constituency 132 for this most generous invitation. I feel humbled and honoured to be among people who stood by my party's candidate, my party, and who have always believed in my vision for Sierra Leone. So thank you my people of Constituency 132.

For those who have said education is a privilege, we in the New Direction say education is a right.

For those who have distributed T-shirts to celebrate the building of expensive roads but allowed our education system to lapse into a wretched state; we say we will sustain our Free Quality Education programme.

Refurbishment of Services School 3

We will continue to dedicate 21% of national budget. We will open access to every Sierra Leonean child regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, religion, or region.

We will make schools safe spaces for girls and we will vigorously campaign against early child marriage, teenage pregnancy, and protect our girls from sexual and gender-based violence. We will pass laws that protect girls and women.

We will distribute free teaching and learning materials and work ever so hard to make our schools better. We will work to restore integrity and the highest standards in our schools. We will eliminate examinations malpractices.

We will focus on the welfare of our teachers, grant them more opportunities to pursue advanced training and give more opportunity to their children.

We will continue to review the school curriculum and teaching methods and we will revise our curriculum to make it fit for purpose for national development and for educating Sierra

Leoneans who will expand and grow the economy of this country.

We will use technology and innovation to enhance teaching and learning and make our students competitive on the global stage. We will focus on improving overall quality in the areas of reading and comprehension, critical thinking, computation, and on science, technology, and engineering.

We do all of this because the future of our nation depends on good quality education. We need the best medical personnel to take care of our health. We need the best engineers to build our roads and hospitals, mine our enormous natural resources, and provide infrastructural solutions.

We need the best scientists, ICT engineers to take full advantage of advances in communications technology for development.

We need the best agricultural extension workers, crop scientists, and food researchers to teach us new farming skills and produce more food for our nation.

We need the best social workers to protect our women and vulnerable populations and to ensure that they are fully included in our national development.

We need everybody to work towards a singular, shared vision and future – to make Sierra Leone a better place for every Sierra Leonean.

My Government believes that education is a critical enabler of national development and investing in quality education is a *sine qua non* for sustainable development. We shall therefore spare no expense because we know the cost of ignorance and we know the cost of lagging behind in development. Our new Sierra Leone refuses to languish in backwardness. This is our new pathway and we will succeed as a nation because we are investing in young people.

Conclusion

So I am very much gratified this morning to be here to formally open these educational facilities. For us all, this is a moment of inspiration; it is a moment of great hope. It makes us all believe what is possible when our hearts are in the right place and when we care very deeply about our communities, our people, and about the future of this nation.

I thank you.