



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, ON THE
PRESENTATION OF THE 2019 ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE ANTI-CORRUPTION
COMMISSION, FREETOWN – 6 AUGUST,
2020**

Courtesies

1. Let me start by commending the leadership and staff of the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) for the Report and your unwavering commitment to the fight against corruption over the last year.
2. Since I assumed office, I have prioritised fighting corruption because it is a threat to our development as a nation. A corrupt country is adverse for economic and social development, foreign direct investment, effective service delivery, fairplay and equal opportunity, equal access to justice and the rule of law. Today, the presentation of this Report gives us an opportunity to reaffirm my Government's commitment to fighting this war on corruption. As, I say often, **THIS IS A WAR WE MUST FIGHT AND IT IS A WAR WE MUST WIN.**
3. The year 2019, which the Report focuses, was both historic and significant in the fight against corruption for many reasons.
4. First, in 2019, I signed into law the Anti-Corruption Amendment Act of 2019 in fulfilment of both a manifesto and public commitment I made during the State Opening of Parliament in 2018 to resolutely stamp out corruption and make it unfashionable in public life. The amended Act further strengthened the powers of the Commission, and addressed challenges that had undermined the success of the ACC.
5. Second, in 2019, the Special Anti-Corruption Division was established in the High Court with five (5) dedicated Judges to exclusively sit on ACC cases. Corruption cases no longer languish in court. Case management and trial processes for corruption cases are now more predictable, fairer, and faster.
6. Third, in 2019, the Honourable Vice President, Dr. Mohamed Juldeh Jalloh, on behalf of my Government, launched my Government's strategic blueprint that includes the public and private sectors in fighting corruption. The National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2019-2023) or NACS is unique because it adopts a holistic, three-pronged approach to fighting corruption: **Education, Corruption**

Prevention, and Enforcement. Also, the strategy foregrounds the effective functioning of the Integrity Management Committees (IMCs) established in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

7. Fourth, in 2019, our international reputation has been enhanced because our international rating on controlling corruption and corruption perception indices are all very favourable. Transparency International's *Corruption Afro-Barometer Report* released in 2019, ranked Sierra Leone third, among 35 countries in Africa, for Government's effectiveness in the fight against corruption. 66% of Sierra Leoneans believe that the Government is doing well in the fight against. Remember that in 2015, only 19% of Sierra Leoneans held the view that their Government was doing well to fight corruption. Sierra Leone jumped up ten places in the 2019 Transparency Global Corruption Perception Index. We have jumped from **129** in 2018 to **119 in 2019**. For the first time, we scored **above the Sub-Saharan average of 32**.
8. Fifth, in 2019, Sierra Leone scored 79% in the Millennium Challenge Corporation *control of corruption indicator*. This was an improvement on the **71%** score in 2018 during our very first year in office. Clearly, this was a significant improvement on the failing score of **49%** scored by our predecessors.
9. Sixth, surveys carried out by independent civil society organisations and funded by foreign governments, indicate significant improvements in fighting corruption. The Centre for Accountability and Rule of Law's National Corruption Perception Survey Report titled "*Actions, Hopes and Impediments in the fight against corruption in Sierra Leone*," states that 92% of respondents believe that the Anti-Corruption Commission is creating the greatest impact in the fight against corruption. The survey further reports that three years ago, 57% of Sierra Leoneans believed there were sacred cows. That number has decreased to 47.7% over the last one year indicating greater confidence in investigation, prosecution, and trial rates.
10. I am pleased to note that in 2019, the Anti-Corruption Commission expanded its operations and opened its North-West

Regional office in Port Loko. As I have indicated, decentralising the control of corruption broadens the overall integrity framework because it gets more local stakeholders and actors directly engaged in combatting corruption in their local precincts.

11. I also note the progress made in constructing the headquarters of the Anti-Corruption Commission. Government will continue providing all necessary support to ensure its timely completion.
12. Ladies and gentlemen, whilst these developments highlighted above show that we are clearly on the right path, winning the war against corruption requires sustained commitment and increased public confidence. There will always be concerns, opinions, and challenges about the cases you investigate, the cases you prosecute, the cases you win, and the cases you lose in court. But do not be distracted. As a Government, we are determined and committed to a sustained and elevated fight against corruption in this country.
13. Let me conclude by appealing directly to citizens that the fight against corruption is not just the responsibility of the Government or the Anti-Corruption Commission. Given the cost of corruption for our national development, for service delivery, and for economic and other opportunities, it is the duty of every citizen to say something and do something about ending corruption. It is a veritable existential threat to our nation and we must all see corruption as a common enemy that we must collectively fight. **TOGETHER, WE MUST FIGHT CORRUPTION AND TOGETHER WE WILL WIN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION.**

On that note, I am pleased to receive the 2019 Annual Report from the Commissioner of the Anti-Corruption Commissioner and hope to receive the next Report with even more accomplishments. **I thank you.**