



**OPENING REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS
MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA
LEONE AT THE HIGH-LEVEL SECRETARY-GENERAL'S
CONFERENCE FOR THE REPLENISHMENT OF THE
PEACEBUILDING FUND - 26TH JANUARY 2021**

H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations;

H.E. Mr. Abdullah Adam Hamdok, Prime Minister of Sudan;

The Hon. Marc Garneau, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada;

H.E. Mr. Heiko Maas, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany;

Ms. Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Prize Laureate

H.E. Annika Soder, of the UNSG's Independent Eminent Persons for the 2020 Peacebuilding Architecture Review

Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning:

1. It is with great pleasure that I participate in this conference as Co-Chair. At the outset, let me thank the Secretary General for his efforts in convening this high-level Conference for the Replenishment of the Peacebuilding Fund. I also thank every one of my co-chairs and featured speakers for standing with the Secretary General to mobilize critical support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding through escalated contributions to the Fund's \$1.5 billion requirements for the period 2020-2024, as earlier laid out by the Secretary General.
 2. I thank the United Nations, and Canada in particular, on behalf of the Government and People of Sierra Leone, for the tremendous impact of the peacebuilding fund in consolidating and sustaining peace in Sierra Leone through five peaceful democratic elections cycles and transitions.
 3. The impact of COVID-19 has exacerbated existing social inequalities in the world, eroded cohesion, and accelerated conflicts. There is therefore increased demand for
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peacebuilding support in various nations. However, the resources available to consolidate and sustain peace are meagre and underinvestment risks reversing hard-won gains.

4. I am therefore heartened that, for the first time, this comprehensive five-year Peacebuilding Fund Strategy sets out a bold vision for significantly scaling up work on conflict prevention and peacebuilding. I am hopeful that under its new Strategy, the Fund will maintain its niche for providing timely, catalytic, and risk-tolerant support for peacebuilding as mandated in its terms of reference. The emphasis on regional and multi-country peacebuilding, women and youth inclusion, and other peacekeeping and peacebuilding transitions is welcome. So also is the emphasis on institutionalising peer learning and experience sharing and to incentivize coherent work across institutional mandates for the UN system to work jointly in support of national efforts.

Mr. Secretary General and Co-Chairs,

5. Since the end of the civil war and especially since 2007, Sierra Leone has benefited immensely from the catalytic impact of the Peacebuilding Fund. The PBF supported and is still supporting a wide range of peacebuilding and governance initiatives in Sierra Leone including institution building for inclusive democratic governance, elections and peaceful democratic transitions, national cohesion, community conflict prevention and resolution, inter-community dialogues, access to justice, protection of human rights, improved security sector coordination, and youth and gender empowerment and inclusion.
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6. As Sierra Leone exits the formal agenda of the Peace Building Commission, we are continuing to consolidate and strengthen our democratic and human rights institutions, foster inclusive and accountable governance, collaborate closely with civil society and communities, promote access to justice, improve the security and disaster management sectors, make our institutions more accountable and resilient, and implement strategic activities for inclusive and sustainable development as mapped out in our Medium Term National Development plan.
 7. We have significantly lowered the risk profile of our nation, made the investment ecosystem more conducive, and invested in human capital development and critical infrastructure projects. We organised a national consultative conference on peace and national cohesion just under two years ago and Parliament has since passed a law that establishes a permanent and independent national commission for peace and national cohesion.
 8. Sierra Leone will remain engaged with the PBC in implementing the national priorities of human capital development, economic diversification, climate resilience, strengthening national institutions, developing and supporting the Independent Commission on Peace and National Cohesion, and supporting our nation's COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.
 9. Our nation's story has been possible partly because of the investments by the Peacebuilding Commission. I therefore call on all UN Member States to both renew their commitment to the UN's peacebuilding efforts and to mobilize adequate, predictable, and sustainable financing for
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peacebuilding through a broadened donor base. In that regard, as a token of our renewed commitment, Sierra Leone pledges Two Hundred Thousand (\$200,000) United States Dollars per year over the five-year period to the Peacebuilding efforts of the UN.

I thank you.
