



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR JULIUS MAADA BIO,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AT THE
SPECIAL SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY ON CHALLENGES AND MEASURES TO PREVENT AND
COMBAT CORRUPTION AND STRENGTHEN INTERNATIONAL
COOPERATION - 2 JUNE 2021**

H.E. Mr. Volkan Bozkir, President of the General Assembly,
Colleagues

H.E. Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I commend you, Mr. President, for organizing today's special session on the challenges and measures to prevent and combat corruption. Sierra Leone fully supports the political declaration we have adopted today. I hope that our collective effort will lead to a significant reduction in corruption globally.
2. With strong commitment and political will, Sierra Leone has made tremendous progress in the fight against corruption. Since 2018, Sierra Leone has moved up 12 places in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. According to the AfroBarometer, corruption prevalence has reduced from 70% before 2018 to 40% in 2020. Since 2018, also, Sierra Leone has consistently passed the control of corruption indicator in the Millennium Challenge Corporation's scorecard, and Sierra Leone has been selected to develop a compact.
3. With conviction rates of over 90%, the Anti-Corruption Commission has also recovered billions of Leones in non-conviction asset based recoveries, higher in the last three years than at any time in the eighteen-year existence of the Commission.
4. To achieve this, my Government has adopted progressive laws and institutional reforms. The reviewed anti-Corruption law increases minimum punishment for major corruption offences, protects whistleblowers, shifts evidential burden for offences involving offering or receiving an advantage, and allows the Commission to appeal against sentences that are deemed lenient or disproportionate.
5. Sierra Leone has acceded to UNCAC and developed a comprehensive National Anti-Corruption Strategy with pillars that strengthen the anti-corruption regime, implement actions for preventing and controlling corruption, and establishing legally enforceable mandatory minimum standards, among others.
6. We have undertaken deep structural and process reforms of public sector institutions. The digitalisation of procurement, recording, and accountability processes have reduced red tape and made it easy to review the entire paper and money trail.

7. We have also constituted a broader accountability platform to take high level strategic decisions, share information, and implement and institutionalise actions to fight corruption. This coordinating body comprises the Office of the Vice President, the Chief Justice, and other key National stakeholders.
8. Our reforms align with international best practices, are holistic, but are agile and progressive. They are driven by our belief as a nation that the fight against corruption is good for governance, good for peace, good for business, and good for inclusive national development.
9. Sierra Leone therefore stands ready to collaborate with Member States and International Institutions to tackle the scourge of corruption for the benefit of our peoples.

I thank you.