



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS
MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SIERRA LEONE AT THE INAUGURATION OF
THE UNIVERSITY COURT AND INSTALLATION
OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE MILTON
MARGAI TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF SIERRA
LEONE, GODERICH, FREETOWN, 11
NOVEMBER 2021**

The Honourable Speaker of Parliament,
 The Chief Minister and Ministers of Government,
 Honourable Members of Parliament,
 Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps
 Our Revered Traditional Rulers and Community Leaders,
 Chairman and Members of the Tertiary Education Commission,
 Members of Court,
 Academic and Administrative Staff,
 Students Representatives,
 Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
 Good morning:

1. I implore all of us to kindly rise and bow our heads for a moment of silence for our compatriots who we have laid to rest in the wake of great calamity.
2. May God forgive their sins and may they rest in perpetual peace. May their souls be granted *ja'naa*.
3. In sombre prayer, we also ask God/Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala* to grant healing mercies to our brothers and sisters who are in grave pain in the hospitals.
4. But all is not grim in our nation. Yesterday, the world passed judgement on how my Government is ruling the country. The Millennium Corporation Challenge of the United States of America released its scores. For the third year running, the scores affirm that my Government is ruling justly. Additionally, Sierra Leone passed the control of corruption indicator, and this time, with an even higher score of 83%.
5. What a far cry from those days when the best those other people could do was a failing grade every time? Independent assessments from the world are clear. They failed the control of corruption indicator. We are passing the control of corruption indicator every year with progressively higher scores.
6. Sierra Leone also received passing scores on human and civil rights, ruling justly and on natural resource management. The world recognises, for

the first time, that we are now managing our natural resources as a responsible nation should.

7. But most critically, the MCC lauds our scores in almost all areas of investing in people from primary education and girls' education to healthcare expenditure and greater immunisation rates. This global indicator recognises and agrees with us that when we invest in human capital development, we are investing in an inclusive and sustainable future for this nation.

8. So, we are not here to announce surprises today. We are here to further cement our solid reputation for fulfilling pledges that we make – “talk and do.” My Government has fulfilled another manifesto commitment. It is indeed my pleasure and great honour to be here at the inauguration of the Court and the installation of the Chancellor of the brand new Milton Margai Technical University.

9. If our universities are places where new skills and ideas are learned; places where the future is shaped by the now through the translational sciences and innovation; places of transformation; places where we learn that possibilities are limitless through technical skills training and entrepreneurship; places where careers are shaped; then this historic and momentous occasion today demands that we collectively, as a nation, re-imagine, and transform the purpose of higher education in our country forever. As I have said elsewhere, it is good for our national development.

10. Last year, I was thrilled by the warmth and enthusiastic welcome I received at this campus. This year, I return the favour with the promised visit to announce the full and permanent transformation of this institution into The Milton Margai Technical University.

11. As promised in the people's manifesto and delivered, I make this announcement today not as Chancellor but as VISITOR to this University as per law. I will support the growth and development of the university but I will no longer be its chancellor. That again is another manifesto promise delivered.

12. Our structural reforms in the wage sector for university staff and faculty now mean that salaries and subventions are paid regularly. That was

another manifesto commitment; that commitment has been delivered and staff and faculty are a lot more satisfied.

13. Let me thank the leadership of this prestigious institution for its dedicated hard work in managing the institution thus far and for working relentlessly with the Tertiary Education Commission to develop this new and progressive pathway for this new university.

14. The last time I was here, you showcased the beautification of the campus and the effective management structure - including using technology - you have put in place. Clearly, I expect nothing less from the youngest, one of the best, and one of the most promising tertiary education leaders in this nation. I am eminently very proud of your work and your leadership, Professor Kanu.

15. As my Government continues to improve access to free quality education at the primary and secondary levels, these technical universities are the hubs of tertiary education and skills training, and the centres for innovation and entrepreneurship. I would expect that a student can be nurtured from BECE through senior technical education and skills training to a technical degree. So becoming a technical university is one thing; discharging the core mandate of a technical university is a far daunting task to which you must be equal.

16. We must meet global standards. We must be competitive. We must present various pathways. We must be eager to produce the best skilled technical workers to transform the economy and meet the nation's changing skills needs.

17. I acknowledge that you have tasked yourselves with recruiting and maintaining faculty with outstanding academic and professional qualifications who will be engaged in research and consultancies. But technical universities must also support the growth of the informal economy; enhance micro, small, and medium scale enterprises; and promote technology adaptation and innovation. By so being, it positions itself as a key driver for economic diversification and inclusive growth.

18. I must underscore the great value of effective administrative systems, resource mobilisation from various streams, and prudent management of the new university's finances. To my mind, harnessing measured institutional effectiveness mechanisms will support that goal.

19. To the incoming Chancellor, continue being the best you could be. Craft a productive working relationship with the university's management and you will succeed. Start small personal fights and you will be distracted from your mission which you have so far executed with aplomb. I am pleased that your astute management and your positive relationship with students have led to far fewer strike actions.

20. When you design and develop curricula, be attentive to the value of translational sciences to development. Offer courses that present value for both the career of the graduate and the development of the industry. I am encouraged that you have entered into partnerships with colleges and universities, both locally and internationally.

21. I am informed that these include the Regional Centre for Energy and Environmental Sustainability –part of the University of Energy and National Resources, Sunyani, Ghana --; Food and Agricultural Organization; World Food Programmes; Belvedere SL. Ltd; Sierra Leone Roads Safety Authority; National Youth Commission; Bennimix Food Company; and The Blue Crest College to support the training of administrative staff on ICT, among others.

22. But I must commend you also on your service to the local Goderich community by offering your health centre for the use of the community, providing solar lights to the community, and offering free tuition to eligible students in the Goderich community.

23. But in your relationship with the community are other opportunities for teaching short duration courses on the fishing supply chain or fish harbour management. This could be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources. There are also opportunities in the green economy and in the creative arts.

24. You have a heritage to be proud of and a great future to work towards. This institution has evolved through sixty years from a teacher training

department at Fourah Bay College to what it is today. As we are informed regularly by historians, only successive SLPP-led governments have cared enough to establish and transform this institution through all its phases of growth.

25. I want to proudly continue that tradition today. It is therefore a great honour to declare this institution and rename it as the Milton Margai Technical University. Congratulations.

Thank you and God bless this Republic of Sierra Leone.