



**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR.
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, AT THE
CLOSING AND AWARDS CEREMONY OF
THE 2022 NATIONAL HEALTH SUMMIT.
FREETOWN, 9TH APRIL 2022**

Madam First Lady,
Ministers of Government,
Honourable Members of Parliament,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
Our Development Partners,
Our ever-outstanding healthcare professionals,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good evening again.

1. Let me start these short remarks by thanking our partners who have endured these heady deliberations with us. Your support has been timely and invaluable. We believe we could be better and do a lot more with your precious support in expertise, equipment, supplies, and funding resources.
2. Let me also thank you, our healthcare professionals, once more, for all that you do so selflessly and so passionately. It is truly a labour of love and we appreciate and commend every moment you promote, protect, and nurture lives. You are there from the first moments of life and tend to the last breath. For that, thank you and thank you so much more.
3. In my keynote at the plenary, I noted that this national health summit should be both a moment of reflection and a moment of introspection. This first ever National Health Summit goes beyond the everyday activities of giving care with compassion and doing everything that is in the best interests of patients, while treating patients and their families with true empathy. It goes beyond getting better skills and a better work environment or advocating on behalf of patients. It is about asking ourselves what we can keep doing better and how we can be better.
4. I am reminded of Dale Carnegie, the inspirational American writer whose focus on self-improvement has always been enlightening. He notes that "Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage".

5. He furthers that, "If you want to conquer fear, do not sit at home and think about [fear itself]. Go out and get busy". We have not feared the inevitable that there are gaps in our health service delivery models and standards of care. We have not feared to address persistent questions and outcomes to be met. We have got ourselves busy over the last three days and we have held deep and meaningful conversations that have opened our eyes.
6. Together, we will use those recommendations to adjust our strategies, engage our partners, and make healthcare service delivery even better in this nation.
7. But this night is also about recognising those persons and institutions that have been truly outstanding. Together, we have reduced maternal and child mortality over the last four years and we have reduced the incidence of malaria and common disease burdens. We have successfully fought off every wave of COVID that has been thrown at us and our vaccination rates are higher than the average in Africa. We have refurbished more hospitals and recruited and trained more health care workers. We now have better working conditions and more professional enhancement training across board. We now operate a national emergency medical service and run a more efficient national medical supplies agency. These are no mean achievements. All the foregoing you have done collectively and done in the best interests of our nation. Thank you. If I could, I could award every healthcare professional. But we can only recognise the few among us who have gone beyond the call of duty. They have done things that are praiseworthy and worthy of emulation.
8. Dr. Austin Demby, I want to thank you for your leadership and thank you for showing us that when we get governance right and engage our practitioners, stakeholders, and partners in one room, we stop talking and working at cross purposes. When we discuss what all of us could do together, as a collective, only good can come of it.
9. To everyone in this room and those who are on and off duty tonight, thank you for all you do. As a Government, I make a firm commitment

HEALTH SUMMIT 4

that proceedings from this national health summit will be closely studied and implemented with all due diligence.

10. Let me close by once more thanking all participants and all awardees here tonight.

May God bless Sierra Leone.