



**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, DR.  
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, AT  
THE CEREMONY TO CONFER  
CITIZENSHIP. FREETOWN, STATE  
HOUSE, 28<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2022**

## CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY 2

Ministers of Government,  
The Chief Immigration Officer,  
Fellow citizens, especially those with whom we are grateful to be sharing  
our common ancestral home,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Oona kusheh kusheh kusheh

1. It is a great honour to welcome all of you on the day after we celebrated our country's 61<sup>st</sup>
2. We thank you for joining us to continue those celebrations here today. Today, we celebrate our common ancestry. We welcome each and every one of you home with open arms. You never left. Your DNA says you have always been of us and with us.
3. All around us are dotted historical reminders and monuments of departures and of arrivals –some sad and harrowing; some celebratory – from Bunce Island to the Cotton Tree, under which the very first set of resettlers gathered to thank the Lord for their safe return home in 1787.
4. On these very grounds too, the company built a fort – one that guaranteed the physical safety of the colony's inhabitants but also assured that they were here to stay and make this home. And as they stayed, so too do we urge you to stay and make this place home.
5. Yesterday we celebrated our nation's independence. We celebrate in peace – the peace that only the fourth most peaceful country in Africa and one of the most-friendly people in Africa know.
6. The joy of living in a country that fought off three successive waves of COVID-19 and is now certified by the CDC in the United States as a very low-risk nation; a tough and optimistic people whom history has kicked down several times, but who always get up, dust themselves, and keep moving on with purpose.

### CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY 3

7. The freedom of living in a country where we have abolished the death penalty, removed all criminal libel laws, unfettered the press, reduced prison populations, joined the international religious freedom or belief alliance, and protected and promoted the rights of women and the disabled.
8. The optimism of living in a nation where every child is assured of free quality education; where every girl will get justice if she ever becomes a victim of sexual violence; where more people especially in the rural areas have access to quality healthcare within a five-mile radius, where there is increased access to electricity and potable water, where quality roads and infrastructure are opening up markets, trade, and services.
9. The hope of knowing that one is living in a nation that has successively passed the scorecard of the Millennium Challenge Corporation of the United States for lowering corruption and ruling justly.
10. The assurance that this Government is business-friendly and has opened up the business eco-system, especially for private investments where your investments are protected, and you can make and repatriate or reinvest profits as you so wish. This is our Sierra Leone under our New Direction administration.
11. I am informed that you have been engaged with Ministries, Departments, and Agencies in a heritage business and investment workshop. Some of you are in the process of acquiring your very own slice of beautiful Sierra Leone and planning to relocate families. Some of you have immersed yourselves in local communities and cultures of your heritage.
12. Always be positive ambassadors who will rebrand and promote Sierra Leone. Make this, your home, a destination for investment. Promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and invest in areas and at rates you can afford. They do say life can turn on a dime, and here, there are great opportunities to make dollars out of dimes. Leverage your contacts and your own skills to support inclusive growth and sustainable development in our common home.

## CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY 4

13. With that mindset, I see no reason why the Government of Sierra Leone should not assign acres of land for free anywhere in the country to our diaspora families that wish to put those lands to productive use. A "Salone Reunion City" it could be, and I hope we believe in and pursue the dream with unrelenting energy.
14. However, if you want to be a Sierra Leonean, be so! This is the land of your heritage; this is your ancestral home.
15. It is the realm of the free. Exalt and protect its good name at all times. Great, should be the love that you always have for this our country. Together, firmly, let us stand united to sing the praises of our native land. In all you do and in all you want to do, know that my Government will always give you a nurturing hand.
16. You can probably relate to Elvis Presley's lyrics that "Home is where the heart is." This is home. This is where the heart is.
17. Welcome to Sierra Leone. Oona kabor. Ekhushéh.