



**WELCOME REMARKS BY HIS
EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA
LEONE, AT THE GOSL-EU FORUM,
STATEHOUSE, FREETOWN -
17TH NOVEMBER 2022**

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Freetown, Sierra Leone.

1. I am pleased to particularly welcome the EU Ambassador and Team Europe to another round of dialogues on very pertinent issues that continue to shape the relationship between Sierra Leone and the European Union.
2. I am particularly thankful for the participation of the non-resident Ambassadors who have made time to be here for this meeting.
3. Let me use this opportunity to thank the EU for your invaluable contribution to Sierra Leone's development. I am regularly briefed by the Minister of Planning and Economic Development on the ongoing development cooperation and interventions across the country.
4. My Government particularly appreciates your support to key sectors in the Medium Term National Development Programme -- Human Capital Development (Education and Agriculture, in particular); Infrastructure (Roads and bridges); and, Governance (Civil Service Reform, Civil Registration, and Elections). The country-specific bilateral cooperation is also very much appreciated
5. This is the fourth meeting since my taking office in 2018, and the first since the arrival of the EU Head of Delegation, Ambassador Muller.
6. I always look forward to this dialogue as it provides an opportunity to assess and strengthen the partnership between the Government and people of Sierra Leone and the European Union.
7. This dialogue is also an excellent opportunity to address emerging issues and concerns in the partnership.
8. In an era of global interdependence, the EU needs Africa as much as Africa needs the EU. Risks and challenges faced by African countries may have far-reaching ramifications for Europe. In the midst of a seeming global reset, this dialogue we are having this afternoon becomes even more important.

9. Sierra Leone is only six hours away from Europe. There are new and existing opportunities that we can further harness. I am hopeful they will emerge during the course of these discussions. I therefore look forward with open-minded optimism to the dialogue this afternoon.
10. Let me once more welcome everyone very warmly. I look forward to fruitful deliberations. Thank you.