

**OPENING STATEMENT BY HIS  
EXCELLENCY DR JULIUS MAADA BIO,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF  
SIERRA LEONE AND CHAIRPERSON OF  
THE APR FORUM OF HEADS OF STATE  
AND GOVERNMENT, AT THE 32<sup>ND</sup>  
SUMMIT OF THE APR FORUM OF HEADS  
OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT - 9<sup>TH</sup>  
FEBRUARY 2023**

- **Your Excellency Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairperson of the African Union,**
- **Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,**
- **Your Excellency Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,**
- **Your Excellencies, APRM Focal Points,**
- **Honourable Dr Ali Abderrahmane Hagggar, Chairperson of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons,**
- **Honourable Members of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons,**
- **Professor Eddy Maloka, CEO of the APRM Continental Secretariat,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. I would like to welcome you all to this 32<sup>nd</sup> Summit of the APR Forum of Heads of State and Government. The Special Summit that I convened at the end of July 2022, at the behest of former President Uhuru Kenyatta, allowed us to partake in the peer review of Kenya's reports on the Big Four Agenda. That was delayed for various reasons.
2. On our agenda for this 32<sup>nd</sup> Summit, we will make further progress by peer-reviewing three reports that have been prepared following reviews that were carried out at least over a year ago: the second-generation country review of Niger; Djibouti's targeted review on fiscal decentralisation; and, Uganda's targeted reviews on the underdevelopment of infrastructure, the underdevelopment of agriculture and the non-responsiveness of the public service.
3. We started off 2023 with a renewed focus on food security and food sovereignty among African states especially as the continent's agriculture and nutrition needs have been most affected by pandemic disruptions and the global economic crisis. This has induced what has been described by the press as a "cost of living crisis" that has in turn had other consequences for Africa's governance, peace, security, and stability.
4. But we believe a sustainable solution is possible and we are doing something about this crisis. At the "Dakar 2 Summit on Feed Africa: Food Sovereignty and Resilience" -- hosted by President Macky Sall and the African Development Bank's President Akinwumi Adesina, -  
- 34 Head of States and government presented Food Agriculture Delivery Compacts and renewed commitments to accelerate the implementation of the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP).
5. So, looking back on 2022, from the perspective of the APRM Continental Secretariat, there was a need to take a more multi-faceted look in developing the third edition of the Africa Governance Report given the resurgence of unconstitutional changes of government, or attempts thereof, in certain parts of Africa. This was the mandate accorded the Secretariat in May last year at the Extraordinary Summit of the AU Assembly of Heads of State in Malabo.

6. I would singularly like us all to commend the CEO of the APRM, Professor Eddy Maloka, for his stewardship of the whole process- from design to the final reports. His leadership and his support to the review teams has been critical for the success of all the targeted reviews.
7. Moreover, I would like to express my gratitude, to the leaders of the countries that participated in the targeted reviews on the theme of the 2023 Africa Governance Report. I look appreciate the Republic of Guinea and Comoros and I look forward to their full accession.

**Excellencies, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

8. As we celebrate 20 years of existence and remarkable service, the APRM has played a significant role in shaping Africa's views on governance. Permit me therefore to pay tribute to those leaders who have shepherded the APRM, made relentless efforts to expand its reach and impact, and supported the work of a diligent group of experts, and built a robust mechanism that is helping the continent translate its large aspirations and potential into tangible gains in the political, economic and social domains
9. The revitalisation strategy that was launched under the chairmanship of Former President Uhuru Kenyatta, in 2016, bore much fruit. The late President Idriss Deby Itno oversaw the creation of partnerships between the APRM and entities, in Africa and beyond, that would also advance economic development and good governance.
10. Although marked by a global pandemic, President Cyril Ramaphosa's tenure as Chair of the Forum from 2020 to 2022 marked the APRM's growth and renewal in terms of accessions, reviews, and paradigm. For all that he and his predecessors did, we are immensely grateful.
11. As has been the case for the last few years, the APRM Continental Secretariat has prepared a report to honour the previous Chairperson of the Forum. The presentation of President Cyril Ramaphosa's legacy report will be done today.
12. Indeed, the APR Forum and other entities in the Mechanism's architecture can look back on twenty years of resilience and impact with much pride.

13. Professor Eddy Maloka's contributions to the drive to reinvigorate the APRM Continental Secretariat have been significant. Since his appointment in 2016, he has provided a new energy and inspirational leadership with great éclat. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank him for his service to the continent.
14. Professor Maloka's term of office has now come to an end. This body should therefore ensure that arrangements are rapidly made to find, in the shortest possible time, the next CEO of the Continental Secretariat.
15. Given the critical role that good governance plays in the fortunes of our continent, it is imperative that we find an individual with impeccable professional credentials who is conversant with the challenges faced by continent in the areas of democratic inclusion and promotion, economic inclusion, and youth and gender empowerment. We need an expert who can generate strategies to implement continental and global blueprints for development and also expand and consolidate partnerships the APRM has forged with like-minded institutions around the world.
16. In addition to the Continental Secretariat, the leadership of the APR Panel of Eminent Persons will be renewed. We are grateful to Honourable Dr Ali Abderrahmane Hagggar and Honourable Abdoulie Janneh for serving as Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Panel since last year. It is my hope that the next bureau of the Panel will also discharge its responsibilities with diligence and passion.

**Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,**

17. We are welcoming new member-states to the APRM community today. I would like to congratulate them for taking the decision to voluntarily accede to the Mechanism and assure them of our full cooperation and support as they participate in its activities and attend its meetings at all levels.
18. The accessions that we will witness today bring us closer to attaining universal accession. Our membership currently stands at 42 countries, representing 75% of the AU member-states.

19. I encourage and invite our other ten AU member-states to accede to the APRM so that we can speak with the same voice on issues of governance, peace, security, and stability.
20. To my mind, the dearth of strong and effective institutions makes modernisation, stability, and prosperity in our respective countries arduous. Within the AU context, we must continue investing in building institutions like the APRM that have furthered good governance, peace, security, and stability across our continent.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**