



**REMARKS BY HIS EXCELLENCY,  
DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE AT  
THE PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION  
OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION ON  
IMMUNISATION RECOVERY 2030,  
-19TH FEBRUARY 2023**

## **Excellencies, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. Thank you again for your presence and for your insightful contributions to these conversations today. We all recognise the scope of the challenge; we understand the need for concerted and urgent action; and, we all understand the need to make meaningful commitments and implement concrete initiatives to realise the outcomes to which we aspire.
2. Though 2021 was expected to be the year of routine immunisation recovery from the shock of the Covid-19 pandemic, there is still a continued decline in immunisation coverages in several countries on the continent.
3. The consequences have been dire. Inadequate Immunisation coverage levels have already resulted in avoidable outbreaks of measles and polio in the past 12 months. Clearly, this underscores the vital role of immunisation in keeping populations healthy. Coordinated and determined efforts are required to reach universal levels of coverage to prevent further such outbreaks.
4. There is cause for optimism, however. Over the years, the Africa region has made tremendous gains in increasing access to immunisation and driving down childhood deaths. Several diseases, such as polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus, are on the brink of eradication and elimination respectively. The introduction of new vaccines is stamping out age-old diseases.
5. Our collective target of achieving the Immunisation Agenda 2030 (IA2030) to which we committed is only 7 years away. We made commitments to improve health security, to achieve universal health coverage, and to provide access and equity for immunisation and innovation. As a continent, how do we galvanise ourselves over the next seven years in order to deliver on our commitments?
6. Today, 19th February 2023, on the margins of the 36th Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government, I call on all member states to commit to, and adopt the draft declaration presented here today.

I thank you for your continued commitment and our collective resolve.