

**HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS  
MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE.**

**CITATION FOR THE CONFERMENT  
OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF  
LETTERS (D.Litt), HONORIS CAUSA,  
NJALA UNIVERSITY.  
FRIDAY, 17<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**

1. Under powers conferred by the Universities' Act and Njala University ordinances, Njala University has determined that His Excellency, Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, be awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters, *Litterarum Doctor, (Honoris Causa)* of this university.
2. The University notes Your Excellency's outstanding record of public service as a brave soldier; a daring patriot who initiated peace and a pluralist democracy after a generation of repressive autocratic rule; as a visionary and transformational leader over the last five years; and, as a key driver of irreversible, inclusive, and sustainable progress in Sierra Leone.
3. In spite of harsh economic challenges and budgetary constraints brought on by exogenous factors, you have not only capably managed the economy, but you have doubled energy access and access to potable water; constructed more public buildings including schools and health facilities; built new jetties, new bridges, new highways and city roads, and a brand-new airport; escalated mitigation and adaptation

measures against the effects of climate change and established a national disaster management agency; and more.

4. You have made extraordinary efforts at institutionalising a peaceful democracy with functional and transparent associated peace architecture, equipped and supported the security sector to carry out its constitutional mandate, and invested in youth in a bid to foster just and peaceful society.
5. You have opened up more democratic spaces and gained global acclaim for your fight against corruption; your institutional and governance reforms; your progressive laws that have abolished the death penalty, repealed obnoxious press laws, and expanded access to justice and land ownership; your promotion and protection of women's and girls' rights; your social protection initiatives for vulnerable populations; your vision for a food-self-sufficient Sierra Leone; your reforms of the business ecosystem; and more.
6. Your leadership at the continental level is evident in your very successful tenure thus far of the chairmanship of the Africa Peer Review Forum and the Committee of Ten for the Reform of the United Nations. Sierra Leone's unanimous endorsement for a seat on the United Nations Security Council in the non-permanent category after over half a century and your co-chairing of global United Nation's steering groups and summits on SDG and education.
7. But it is your visionary reforms in the educational sector that will have far-reaching impacts for sustainable and inclusive development. You have said the future of education will define the future and fortunes of this country and that education is good for personal development, good for community development, and good for inclusive and sustainable national development.
8. So when opposition political naysayers ridiculed and harangued about how impossible your vision was, you remained thoughtful, resolute, and you persisted. In spite of the straightjacket of financial constraints imposed by a pandemic and a global hikes in fuel and food prices, you have introduced reforms in education that have impressed and inspired

your peers, galvanized multilateral partners, and made the children of Sierra Leone the better for it. You have earned the enviable stature of a global champion for transforming education, produced the best Minister in the world for education, and you are a highly-sought-after thought-leader for making education matter for the future and fortunes of a small nation.

9. With your leadership, national curricular at all levels have been reviewed to reflect five core competencies of comprehension, critical thinking, computation, creativity, and civic education. Your emphasis on foundational learning has led to the establishment of early childhood learning centres across the county. Innovation, science, technology, and agriculture are at the cusp of this transformation. You have narrowed the digital divide at all levels with your increased access to and use of technology in education. With your use of information and communications technology, you minimised learning disruptions and losses even in the midst of a global pandemic; students and parents now have immediate access through USSD to their transition exams; supplemental material, in addition to nationwide free teaching and learning materials, are available through the use of technology in education; and, the comprehensive national education data hub is freely available to development partners, policy makers, citizens, and parents.
10. Your government provides free quality education for all girls studying STEM disciplines from basic education to the end of university. The early signs are promising. This academic year, more girls enrolled in STEM disciplines at universities across this nation than at any time in the history of this nation. This is progress. In a few years, we will have more women scientists, more women doctors, more women engineers, and more women innovators.
11. Your Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment law which mandates legal minimums for the participation and representation of women in the public and private sectors is complemented and mirrored in kindred national educational policies and initiatives by the First Lady of the Republic that protect girls from sexual predation, violence, and early marriage; that promote comprehensive safety in schools and

communities; that teach reproductive health and support menstrual hygiene with free sanitary pads nationwide; that assure teenage girls who become pregnant that they will not be doubly victimised and that your Government will ensure that parent learners will continue their education, uninterrupted. And in their learning outcomes and achievements, those parent learners have vindicated your belief in and support for them.

12. In just two words, "Radical Inclusion," you have told girls, pregnant girls, pupils in far-to-reach and hard-to-reach rural areas, children living with disabilities, parents and citizens that everyone can and must be all he or she can be through education. You have added millions of learners. Just yesterday, the UK Government supported Leh we Lan project announced that because of your leadership, 459,000 girls were enrolled in in 2021 in Sierra Leone's public schools compared to 255,000 in 2017 – representing an 80% increase in just four short years.
13. In two words, "school feeding," you have provided healthy and nutritious meals for learners in deprived and vulnerable districts of the country. Retention rates have increased in those areas.
14. In just two words, "free education," you have removed the burden of school fees from parents and guardians who can now afford to send not just one but all of their children to school to receive quality, fit-for-purpose education. In spite of the tough economic times, your commitment to school financing at 22% of national budget has not withered.
15. And you vision and reforms have been holistic throughout the education sector. You have established, equipped, and provided nearly Le2 billion in subventions to ten Government Technical Institutions (GTIs) in nine districts. You have disbursed another 107.7 billion Leones to TVETS and businesses for demand-led reskilling and upskilling.
16. You have provided a 75% increment in staff salaries at public tertiary institutions; and awarded Government Grant-in-Aid to 11,454

students including persons with disabilities, postgraduate studies for health practitioners, the children of teachers who have taught for 10 years and above, children of persons who serve in the Police, Military, and Fire Force. You have also negotiated the award of international scholarships to 533 students in 17 countries.

17. Your belief in providing tertiary education students with the wherewithal to study science and technology is evident in the procurement of 570 iPads that have been distributed to six tertiary institutions; 440 Bluetooth projectors and screens; and 440 magnetic whiteboards procured and distributed to public universities and colleges, of which Njala University is a beneficiary. You have procured laboratory equipment worth one billion Leones and those have been distributed to 2 labs (Biological Sciences & Chemistry) at University of Sierra Leone (USL) and 2 labs (Physics & Chemistry) at Njala University (NU).
18. Because of your belief in universal access to a tertiary education, you have provided 5.8 billion Leones of seed money for the operationalisation of the Student Loan Scheme – an advertisement for the first call of loan applications for Post Graduate Degrees for the 2022/2023 academic year is already out.
19. In terms of institutional building, your work is unparalleled. You have upgraded two polytechnics to Technical Universities (Eastern Technical University and Milton Margai Technical University) with targeted and unique technical curricular that will cater for the technical needs of a developing nation. You have merged and upgraded Freetown Teachers College (FTC) and Government Technical Institute (GTI), Kissy merged to a Polytechnic, now named the Freetown Polytechnic. You have also rehabilitated and equipped resource centres at five teacher training institutions.
20. In the area of policymaking and legislation, your work over the last five years has been exemplary. You developed and launched the Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2022- 2026, the National Technical Vocational Education And Training (TVET) Policy; the Student Loan Scheme Act 2021; and, the policy For The Award Of Government

Grant-In-Aid And Other Awards now reviewed to include Persons with Disability in private institution with tuition equivalent to that of the public institutions.

21. The National Council of Technical Vocational and other Awards (NCTVA) Act 2005 is under review; the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Act 2005 is under review; and your Government is developing the Sierra Leone Dual Apprenticeship Policy and also the National Policy on Post-Secondary Education Integrating and Mainstreaming Disability Issues to Promote Lifelong Learning for all including Persons With Disability.
22. Most significantly, you bravely trod where no Head of State had for over a generation. With the review of the University Act of 2021, you took the audacious decision to relinquish the position of Chancellor for all public universities and become a mere visitor. You famously declared that academia should not be governed by politicians.
23. As a result of your standing with international development partners, your government has received an unprecedented number of projects for higher education. The World Bank has provided \$22 million for a Skills Development Fund to support Demand-lead skills training. BADEA, Saudi Fund, and OPEC are providing \$68 million for the Sierra Leone Education Sector Support Project to support the construction and rehabilitation of Eastern Technical University – Bunumbu campus; Milton Margai Technical University – Goderich, Brookfields and Congo Cross campuses; a seven-storey building to house MTHE/MBSSE at New England Ville, and Magburaka Boys School, among others.
24. The GIZ is supporting the expansion of three Government Technical Institutes (GTI) in Kailahun, Kabala and Kono and the construction of a new GTI in Mattru Jong.
25. The EXIM Bank through ECOWAS has provided \$32m for the construction and operationalization of Kono University of Science and Technology. You have turned the sod and work is ongoing.

26. The government of Japan through UNIDO has provided \$3.8m for the establishment of Automotive Maintenance/Engineering in 3 GTIs. JICA is supporting a Training of Trainers short course in Japan. Planning is underway to train 50 TVET teachers in Uganda who will specialise in the teaching of Japanese vehicle repairs.
27. Direct Aid in Kuwait has provided \$12m for the construction of 6 GTIs, starting with two in Gbinti and Koindu. The IOM project is supporting youth empowerment in vocational skills to respond to labour market demand. The project has produced competency-based training curricula and supported the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education with office equipment and tools. The Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ATVET) project that is supported by the GIZ and AU is supporting Agribusiness. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saint (CJCLDS) has provided 8.4 billion Leones worth of tools and equipment procured for two GTIs.
28. You have so powerfully harnessed two words "education" and "development." The nexus of those two words constitute your vision for the future of Sierra Leone.
29. Julius Maada Bio, you have been a patriot, a reformer par excellence, a transformative and visionary leader who has outstanding demonstrated through his public service and leadership of this country that our best days as a nation are yet to come. For these and the many more things you have done; for infusing our great nation with a renewed and revitalised sense of purpose; for restoring our faith that through education, inclusive and sustainable national development can be achieved, Njala University takes great pride therefore in awarding you the degree of Doctor of Letters, *honoris causa*.