



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HIS
EXCELLENCY, DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA
LEONE AT THE PRE-SUMMIT LUNCHEON
OF THE FIFTH UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON LEAST DEVELOPED
COUNTRIES – 4TH MARCH 2023**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am honoured to be here. I would like to first acknowledge the sterling leadership of Your Excellency Lazarus Chakwera, President of the Republic of Malawi, at a very difficult period for our world and especially for Least Developed Countries (LDCs).
2. Let me also thank **His Highness Tamin Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar**, for being a strategic development partner and for preparing and hosting this conference.
3. I congratulate the incoming Chair for the LDC Group, the Government of Nepal. Be assured of my cooperation and support as you steer the work of the Group in the coming year.
4. Our world faces multiple vulnerabilities including growing inequality and poverty, hunger, armed conflicts and terrorism, climate change, and pandemics. These vulnerabilities continue to impede the capacities and thus progress of LDCs towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. This summit therefore offers an opportunity for LDC Member States to engage among ourselves and exchange views on the best possible ways to implement the Doha Programme of Action (DPoA). It is a comprehensive and ambitious agenda that will get us on track to achieving the SDGs, especially at a time when Africa and other countries in special situations face a myriad of interlocking challenges including food and energy insecurity, the climate crisis, and shrinking development finance. We believe that the effective implementation of the DPoA will bring about transformative changes in the lives of millions of people in the LDCs.
6. We recognize the broad support and positive reflections on the proposals put forward in the course of the negotiations and we continue to emphasize the need for continued solidarity and cooperation, among us the members of the LDCs and development partners in ensuring the implementation of the DPoA.

7. As decision-makers, we should generate the political momentum needed to support the implementation of the six priority areas outlined in the DPoA and other development frameworks.
8. As we engage in the days ahead, we must intensify the call on our development partners to bridge the financing divide, increase access to affordable long-term financing and investments, and also proffer alternatives for debt relief and borrowing terms. All this can be done with a view to enhancing recovery and achieving sustainable development.
9. It also behoves us all to call on the international community, financiers and investors, to work with the LDCs, especially African countries that have structurally weak economies, in order to raise sustainable finance, develop bankable projects, and increase capacity-building for SDG-relevant investment promotion and facilitation.
10. As Members of the global South, we should explore the possibilities of leveraging expertise and resources through South-South Cooperation for the timely implementation of the DPoA.
11. Sierra Leone remains committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda. It informs our national development agenda through the key accelerator Goals: SDG4 (Education) and SDG16 (Justice). Sierra Leone will continue to implement policies that ensure basic, accessible, and inclusive quality education to all children.
12. Sierra Leone will further continue to provide leadership for the g7+ Countries as we work on transitioning from fragility to inclusive sustainable development.
13. The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPOA) meant to graduate half of the LDCs by 2020 could not be met due to multifaceted global challenges that continue to adversely affect LDCs.
14. We should therefore be unrelenting in our drive to provide unprecedented leadership and political will, mobilise resources,

strengthen our efforts, and collaborate closely at regional and inter-regional levels to strengthen global governance, make trade regimes fairer, boost productivity, and invest in infrastructure that foster economic growth.

15. My delegation looks forward to engaging constructively on the foregoing and more in the coming days.

I thank you for your kind attention.