



NATIONAL ADDRESS

BY

H.E. DR JULIUS MAADA BIO,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

**FOLLOWING THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ALL
PEOPLE'S CONGRESS PEACE DIALOGUE**

24TH OF OCTOBER, 2023

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

MY FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

1. Between the 16th and 18th of October 2023, the leadership of the All People's Congress (APC) and the ruling Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) Government of Sierra Leone met and spoke to one another from the heart on what we must all do to move forward after the 2023 multi-tier elections particularly to institutionalise political dialogue and promote inclusive governance.

- 2.** We have once again shown that we may have different socio-political convictions, but our allegiance to our country's development prospects outweighs our personal persuasions.
- 3.** In the Dialogue facilitated by the ECOWAS, the African Union, and the Commonwealth, the leadership of the APC presented their Party's concerns about the 2023 elections but also expressed a strong willingness to join the Government of Sierra Leone to resolve all differences.

4. The Dialogue was held under the auspices of our Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion (ICPNC) – an organisation born out of a national dialogue (Bintumani III) only three years ago. The Peace Commission is a testament to why we must always seek to build state institutions that strengthen our democracy.

5. This Dialogue clearly demonstrates our collective will to put our differences behind us and move forward in the interest of our beloved country.

6. I thank the leader of the joint mediation team Her Excellency Aja Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang, former Vice President of The Gambia, the team of experts from the ECOWAS, the African Union, and the Commonwealth – for their patience and tenacity, and for initiating and supporting the mediation process.

7. I also wish to thank our development partners, who have wholeheartedly supported this pathway to peace and progress in our country.

- 8.** I similarly wish to commend the leadership of the APC and that of the SLPP, who took part in the three days Dialogue for putting the nation first by sitting down and speaking to one another as Sierra Leoneans in a genuine bid to move beyond the concerns and agree on a set of resolutions to promote inclusive governance.
- 9.** Most importantly, I thank every Sierra Leonean citizen for your patience, resilience and unwavering hope in our continued efforts to build a stable democratic society.

10. I have been fully briefed on the details of the negotiated settlement reached by both Parties.

11. The provisions in this mediated Dialogue Agreement will receive the highest consideration from my Government. The Government will work with the main opposition party and all other political parties to ensure that it is fully implemented while at the same time respecting and upholding the rule of law, which is vital to our young democracy.

12. Reviewing our election systems is critical to strengthening our democracy. It is in that spirit I proposed the establishment of a national election system review as a first step to improve the electioneering process in Sierra Leone. I, therefore, take good note of the proposed tripartite leadership to lead the review.

13. As we move forward, I urge all Sierra Leoneans to embrace the spirit of unity and reconciliation. Let us unite, set aside our differences, and work towards a brighter future for our beloved nation. We must

remember that we are all stakeholders in the progress and prosperity of Sierra Leone.

14. As I stated during my address to the Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic, engagement and compromise are the indispensable hallmarks of governance. To that end, I urge the opposition to demonstrate leadership and, in clear conscience, speak out frankly to their supporters that we must embrace each other and ensure peace and stability in Sierra Leone.

15. We wholeheartedly welcome our brothers and sisters back to full participation in the various elective institutions. We must all join in pursuing my Government's five critical national development priorities, especially Feed Salone.

16. I look forward to further engagements with the APC leadership within and beyond the proposed inter-party framework. **WE SHOULD and MUST ALL** come together to pursue the broader national development issues, including strengthening our governance systems and social programmes.

- 17.** To every citizen of this country, I tell you this Dialogue transcends politics and political divides. It is about our country and our people, and we must continue to work hard to promote the values of inclusiveness and unity.
- 18.** My Government will work tirelessly to address the concerns and aspirations of our citizens. We will focus on fostering economic growth, improving education, healthcare, agriculture productivity and infrastructure and ensuring that all Sierra Leoneans feel the benefits of our development efforts.

19. Let us not forget the lessons we have learned during this challenging period. Let us remember that the strength of our democracy lies in the hands of every citizen. It is our collective responsibility to safeguard our democratic values and further strengthen national cohesion.

20. Sierra Leoneans are tired of political bickering, hate speech, and disunity and together, we must say, “**NEVER AGAIN**”. It is time to focus our energies, ideas, and collective will towards a national agenda that delivers food security, provides jobs for our youth, empowers our

women, and propels our nation into a middle-income economy.

21. We do not wish for a country without disagreements, far from it, because our differences make us stronger, but they should never overshadow the unity that binds us as a people.

22. As Sierra Leone continues to take leadership in the sub-region and now on the UN SECURITY COUNCIL, it is time to rally behind your President, Government, and country to make Sierra Leone proud and prosperous.

23. Long live the Republic of Sierra Leone, and
God Bless you all.