



**NATIONAL ADDRESS BY HIS  
EXCELLENCY, THE PRESIDENT,  
BRIGADIER (RTD.) DR. JULIUS MAADA  
BIO ON THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE  
NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY,  
FREETOWN INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE CENTRE - THURSDAY, 14  
DECEMBER 2023**

**The Director General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus,  
The Director General of the Africa Center for Disease Control (CDC), Dr. Jean Kaseya,  
The Director General of the West African Health Organisation (WAHO), Professor Stanley Okolo,  
Government Ministers and Heads of Agencies,  
Members of the Diplomat and Consular Corps,  
Development and Technical Partners,  
Honourable Members of Parliament and Our Revered Traditional Leaders,  
The Private Sector and Civil Society Organisations,  
Members of the Fourth Estate,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Good Afternoon**

- 1.** It is with immense pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today to launch **the National Public Health Agency (NPHA) of the Republic of Sierra Leone.**
- 2.** The launch of the National Public Health Agency is a landmark step following the passing into law of the **Public Health Act 2022** by the Parliament of Sierra Leone.
- 3.** This momentous occasion marks a significant milestone in our nation's journey towards a healthier and more secure future.
- 4.** For far too long, our people have faced the burden of preventable diseases and inadequate access to quality healthcare.
- 5.** As a nation, we have been ravaged by epidemics such as Cholera and Ebola Virus Disease, and the recent COVID-19

pandemic further exposed the vulnerabilities of our healthcare system.

6. Therefore, the establishment of the National Public Health Agency signals **our commitment to the well-being of our citizens and the advancement of our public health infrastructure.**
7. It is a **bold declaration of our resolve to build a resilient public health system** – one that can **effectively prevent, detect, and respond to the multitude of health threats that face our nation and the World.**
8. Today, we are witnessing the realisation of a vision that has been nurtured through collective efforts. A shared determination to build a resilient and responsive healthcare system to ensure the health and prosperity of every Sierra Leonean.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

9. With the lessons learnt from the 2014 to 2016 Ebola outbreak in the Manor River Basin, Sierra Leone has made significant improvements in disease surveillance systems, including the revitalisation of a well-structured **Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response** and the introduction of the **Field Epidemiology Training Programme.**
10. The investments made due to the lessons learnt from the Ebola outbreak have led to significant improvements in the country's preparedness for epidemics, as evidenced by our robust COVID-19 pandemic response.

- 11.** As a Government, we know that without strong political will and a dedicated focus on our public health infrastructure, systems and personnel, we will struggle to maintain our development trajectory.
- 12.** Hence, this National Public Health Agency will **support our Government's Human Capital Development vision to protect and improve the health and social well-being of our population and reduce health inequalities through strong partnerships with individuals, communities and key public, private and voluntary and international organisations.**
- 13.** The National Public Health Agency is a science-based Government organisation that will **serve as a focal point for leadership, expertise and coordination to address public health concerns in line with national public health needs** and compliance with International Health Regulations and the Global Health Security Agenda.
- 14.** The National Public Health Agency will play a pivotal role in coordinating and strengthening our public health initiatives and serve as a central hub for surveillance, response and research, enabling us to detect and address health threats promptly.
- 15.** The integration of modern technology and data-driven approaches will empower our healthcare professionals to make informed decisions and enhance the overall efficiency of our healthcare system.

16. In addition to its role in emergency response, the National Public Health Agency will also focus on preventive measures, health promotion and community engagement.
17. We recognise the importance of fostering a culture of health and well-being, and this Agency will spearhead campaigns and initiatives to raise awareness about key health issues and encourage healthy lifestyles.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

18. By strengthening our public health capabilities, we do not only safeguard the well-being of our citizens but also contribute to regional and global efforts to combat emerging health challenges.
19. I extend my deepest gratitude to the stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to bring this National Public Health Agency to fruition. The dedicated healthcare professionals, the experts in public health, our development and technical partners, and the many others who have contributed their expertise and resources.
20. Your commitment to the health of our nation is commendable, and I am confident that the National Public Health Agency will thrive through your partnerships.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

21. **The National Public Health Agency will not operate in isolation. It will be a collaborative endeavour,** working hand-in-hand with the Ministry of Health, other Government agencies, Civil Society Organisations, Development Partners, and the Private Sector. **Together, we will build a robust**

**public health infrastructure that serves the needs of our people.**

- 22.** As the saying goes, **“THE GREATEST WEALTH IS HEALTH”**. This is not just a launch of a National Public Health Agency; **IT IS A CALL TO ACTION**. I urge **all Sierra Leoneans to embrace the Agency and play their part in building a healthier nation.**
- 23.** Let us invest in public health, promote healthy behaviours and support the work of this vital Agency.
- 24.** With dedication, collaboration and a shared vision for a healthier Sierra Leone, we can overcome any challenge to build a robust public healthcare delivery system that will be responsive to the needs of our people.
- 25. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, on this 14<sup>th</sup> Day of December 2023,** it is with great pride that **I officially launch the National Public Health Agency of the Republic of Sierra Leone.**
- 26.** May The Lord Grant Us All Good Health and Long Life. I Thank You For Your Attention.