



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR JULIUS MAADA BIO PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ON THE
OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH OF SIERRA
LEONE MEDIUM-TERM NATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PLAN (MTNDP)
2024-2030, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE
- TUESDAY 30TH JANUARY 2024**

**Honourable Vice President,
Ministers of Government,
Honourable Speaker and Members of Parliament,
Heads of Ministries, Departments and Agencies,
Representatives of Local Councils and Traditional Leaders,
Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,
Representatives of Non-State Actors,
Trade Unions and the Private Sector,
The Academia and Research Institutions,
School Pupils and University Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
GOOD MORNING!**

1. Today marks another defining moment in our nation's history as we convene to inaugurate our new **MEDIUM-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN** to set a future of unparalleled prosperity and progress.
2. A well-thought-out National Development Plan serves as the backbone of our society, ensuring that the aspirations of our people are not only heard but also meticulously addressed.
3. In this new Medium-Term National Development Plan, we have been holistic and inclusive, ensuring that every voice is heard and every concern is addressed.
4. The Plan brings together a variety of viewpoints, all coexisting in harmony, each playing a role in fostering progress and sparking innovation.
5. Democracy thrives only when supported by real development, which is the foundation for freedom, equality, and prosperity.
6. Our Government recognises that the path to development is paved with challenges, and it is our resolve to face these challenges head-on, guided by the principles of equity, justice and sustainability.
7. We also recognise that our National Development Plan should empower and liberate our people, not constrain them.

- 8.** Our goal is to dismantle barriers, enabling visionaries to envision boundless futures, creators to innovate freely, and citizens to thrive unimpeded.
- 9.** Our Government is driven by a deep-seated belief in the extraordinary potential of our people to rise above adversity and transform the world around them.
- 10.** To actualise this grand vision, it is crucial to have synergy and alignment across all levels of Government. Public Servants and politicians must work in unison towards our common goal – improving the quality of life of our people.
- 11.** Our Government is dedicated to promoting unity and collaboration through our new National Development Plan.
- 12.** This Plan is key to building confidence among our citizens and essential for attracting and fostering investments that drive our nation's growth and development.
- 13.** We strive for predictability and seamless communication, free from the constraints of personal egos, to guide our nation along a path of development, peace and prosperity.
- 14.** As we embark on this transformative journey, we acknowledge the vital importance of innovative financing in overcoming infrastructure challenges. We aim to find creative solutions and build strategic partnerships with various allies to achieve this goal.
- 15.** Our mission is to transform areas of economic challenge into havens of economic opportunity.
- 16.** As we implement these development aspirations, it is crucial to emphasise the vital role of peace and unity.
- 17.** This applies not just to our personal and public lives but also to the collaboration and harmony among the different branches and agencies of our Government.

18. We must ensure synergistic collaboration that encompasses both top-down and bottom-up approaches, fostering cohesion across institutions and between the public and private sectors.
19. This One-Government approach is the cornerstone of our strategy. Every masterplan, every initiative and every process must align with this overarching goal, ensuring that our collective efforts resonate with unity and purpose.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

20. Our successor National Development Plan embodies **the collective Sierra Leonean aspirations for an Inclusive, Green, Middle-Income society by 2039.**
21. Our ambition is resolute: **to cultivate a nation that is food self-sufficient by 2030 and one that is endowed with a skilled and healthy workforce characterised by inclusivity and gender sensitivity.**
22. We envision a Sierra Leone that creates at least half a million new jobs for our youth by 2030, in both skilled and unskilled roles.
23. We also aim to foster a cashless economy marked by increased financial inclusion, vibrant E-government and a public administration system that thrives on efficiency and innovation.
24. We will expand energy production and develop an advanced transport system, seamlessly connecting production centres with markets.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

25. Our Development Plan is informed by regional and global frameworks, including the **ECOWAS Vision 2050**, the **African Union Agenda 2063**, and the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030**, embodying a realistic and comprehensive vision for our nation.

26. The preparation of our new **Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) for 2024-2030** is a significant milestone in translating our revised New Direction Agenda into tangible results that uplift the lives of Sierra Leoneans.
27. In doing this, there is continuity as the new Plan builds on the achievements of the previous Development Plan and tackles unfinished business and emerging challenges with renewed vigour.
28. We are steadfast in our commitment to achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals by 2030** and realising the **Africa We Want by 2063**.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

29. It is important to acknowledge the global challenges that impacted the implementation of our previous Medium-Term National Development Plan for 2019-2023.
30. The onset of the COVID-19 outbreak (ten months after the launch of the previous Plan) and the pandemic's lingering socio-economic impacts, the war in Ukraine that disrupted global supply chains for basic human needs, and the ongoing devastations of climate change and biodiversity loss have created unprecedented obstacles.
31. Despite these challenges, Sierra Leone has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Our economy, which initially suffered a setback, has shown signs of recovery, thanks in part to our swift and targeted COVID-19 mitigation strategies and the lessons learned from previous crises, such as the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak and the commodity price crash in 2014/2015.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

32. The success of our previous Development Plan is evident in the significant strides we have made.
33. Our flagship **Free Quality School Education Programme** led to a substantial increase in school enrolment, achieving gender parity in primary and junior secondary education.

34. We made remarkable progress in reducing maternal mortality rates.
35. Our anti-corruption measures have yielded impressive results, significantly improving our global corruption ratings.
36. My Government has also elevated gender parity and women's empowerment to unprecedented levels. The enactment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Bill has increased female representation in appointed positions and in Parliament.
37. Our achievements during the last five years show our commitment to addressing any challenges that could hinder our national development goals and the Sustainable Development Goals.
38. I take this moment to thank our citizens for their perseverance and resilience during the past five years and the sustained cooperation from our development partners in implementing the previous Development Plan for 2019-2023 amidst unprecedented regional and global economic headwinds.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

39. This new National Development Plan is informed by our **Big Five Game Changers**, which define the strategic priorities of our nation and people for the next five to seven years. These priorities include:
 - I. **"FEED SALONE"** focused on boosting agricultural productivity and ensuring food security;
 - II. **"HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT"**, aimed at delivering inclusive skills and a healthy population;
 - III. The **"YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEME"** serves as a catalyst for social, democratic, economic and national security;
 - IV. **"TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE"** to increase investment in these critical areas; and
 - V. **"TRANSFORMING THE PUBLIC SERVICE ARCHITECTURE"** to ensure efficiency and professionalism in the public sector.
40. These **Big Five** priorities are directly aimed at **achieving Five Goals by 2030: (Goal 1)** A food-self-sufficient country; **(Goal 2)** a highly

capable labour force; **(Goal 3)** the creation of 500,000 new jobs for the youth; **(Goal 4)** a highly productive economy; and **(Goal 5)** a capable and effective public service.

- 41.** "**FEED SALONE**" has been prioritised as our flagship program, addressing the critical issue of food insecurity and its implications for macroeconomic, social and democratic stability.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- 42.** As we gaze upon a horizon rich with potential and promise, I extend gratitude to every individual who contributed to the creation of this innovative blueprint, including representatives from our esteemed development partners, government institutions, local councils and communities, the private sector, civil society and NGOs, persons with disabilities, women and youth groups, community and traditional leaders, trade unions, members of Parliament, academia, students and many more.
- 43.** As we transition from planning to action, let us all embody the spirit of collective activism committed to transforming our aspirations into tangible realities.
- 44.** It is essential for each of us, especially our devoted public servants, to answer the call of duty with steady resolve and dedication in operationalising the National Development Plan through sectoral and district development plans aligned with our national blueprint. Remember, the strength of our policies lies not in their conception but in their execution.
- 45.** It is your dedication and your tireless efforts, often unseen and unsung, that breathe life into our aspirations, turning dreams into tangible achievements for our people.
- 46.** The policies we have so thoughtfully devised, and the ambitions we have courageously defined are far more than mere words on paper.
- 47.** They are the foundations upon which our nation's future will be built, guiding us toward a shared destiny of success and prosperity.

48. We are bound together in this noble endeavour, united by a shared purpose that transcends personal glory. Our aim is not to seek individual accolades but to uplift our people and our nation.
49. If I as the Head of our Government, succeed, it is a victory for us all. If I falter, we all face the peril of unfulfilled potential.
50. We live in a world that moves at a relentless pace, and in these critical times, none can afford to loosen their grip on the reins of progress and duty.
51. Let us embrace this responsibility with the knowledge that **every step we take, every decision we make, is a step towards a brighter future for Sierra Leone.**
52. Let this moment serve as a catalyst for renewed dedication. Let us pledge to uphold the highest standards of service, integrity and commitment.
53. Together, we can and will achieve the extraordinary, building a Sierra Leone that is a symbol of hope, progress, and prosperity for generations to come.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

54. It is now my great honour and privilege to launch the **SIERRA LEONE MEDIUM-TERM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR 2024-2030 (Titled): A TRANSFORMATIVE ACCELERATION AGENDA FOR FOOD SECURITY, HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT, AND JOB CREATION.**
55. We envision that this new National Development Plan will propel us towards our Middle-Income aspiration by 2039.
56. Thank you for your kind attention.