



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR JULIUS MAADA BIO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA
LEONE AT THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE OF THE ECOWAS COURT OF
JUSTICE, FREETOWN INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE CENTRE
- 13TH – 16TH MAY 2024**

- **My Lord, the Sixth President of the ECOWAS Court of Justice, Honourable Justice Edward Amoako Asante,**
 - **My Lord, the Honourable Justice Nicholas Colin Browne-Marke, the Acting Chief Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone,**
 - **The Honourable Speaker of the Parliament of Sierra Leone,**
 - **Your Excellency, Dr Omar Alie Touray, President of the ECOWAS Commission,**
 - **My Lords and My Ladies of the Superior Courts of Judicature of the ECOWAS Court of Justice and the ECOWAS Member Countries,**
 - **My Lords and My Ladies Justices of the Superior Courts of Judicature of Sierra Leone,**
 - **The Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Republic of Sierra Leone,**
 - **The Honourable Government Ministers of the ECOWAS Member States,**
 - **Honourable Ministers of the Government of Sierra Leone,**
 - **Your Worships,**
 - **Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps,**
 - **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**
1. On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Sierra Leone, I welcome you all to the beautiful shores of Sierra Leone.
 2. I am indeed pleased that the ECOWAS Court of Justice chose Sierra Leone as the destination for its 2024 Conference.

3. Sierra Leone was one of the founding members of the **Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)** in May 1975, and she remains firmly committed to the ideals and aspirations of the **ECOWAS Treaty**.
4. The need for cooperation and integration amongst our people in West Africa requires our concerted and best efforts.
5. Such cooperation and integration hold in part the key to our sub-region's prosperity and the well-being of our people.
6. As Members of the ECOWAS, we are bound together by a shared vision of regional integration, cooperation, and the promotion of peace and prosperity for our people.
7. The ECOWAS Court of Justice plays a pivotal role in advancing these noble objectives by upholding the principles of justice, fairness, and the rule of law across our region.
8. The Court's establishment in 2001 was a welcome step towards fostering integration and cooperation, and the strides it has made since its inception are a testament to the importance of this great institution.
9. In commending the leadership of the ECOWAS Court of Justice, I must add that progressively, the Court is succeeding in increasing its crucial role of providing additional justice delivery options to the citizenry of the ECOWAS community.
10. This may be connected with the Court's expanded jurisdiction, as the Amended Protocol in 2005 included the

authority to adjudicate the alleged violation of the human rights of the Community's citizens.

11. The added layer of checks that the Court provides will not only raise awareness of the human rights question but also ensure that Member States do more to uphold the human rights of our citizens.
12. In recent years, West Africa has faced various challenges, ranging from political instability and social unrest to economic disparities and transnational crime.
13. However, amidst these challenges, we have also witnessed remarkable progress and resilience within our communities. It is during times of adversity that the strength of our regional solidarity and commitment to shared values becomes most apparent.
14. This year's Conference theme, **"Enhancing the role, relevance and effectiveness of the ECOWAS Court of Justice through the strengthening of synergies between the Court and National Stakeholders,"** is timely and significant.
15. It reminds us of the fundamental principles that underpin our collective efforts to build a more just, inclusive, and equitable society. It also resonates well with our domestic Justice Sector Reform efforts.
16. It is our sincere hope that the Sierra Leonean Justice Sector and its stakeholders will continue to explore avenues for

sustainable partnership that will be on offer during this Conference and similar conferences in the future.

17. In Sierra Leone, we are steadfast in our commitment to upholding human rights, promoting good governance, and ensuring access to justice for all our citizens.
18. We recognise the critical role of the ECOWAS Court of Justice in safeguarding these principles and providing recourse to those whose rights have been violated.
19. Sierra Leone has always cooperated with the Court. We note in particular that the current composition of the Court has our own Honourable Justice Mohamed Sengu Koroma from our Supreme Court.
20. We trust and do not doubt that he is rendering quality service to the Court, which further speaks to our high level of commitment and support for the Court.
21. **My Lord President**, There are cases on your docket that bear our name, and there are some with our name that have already been concluded.
22. Worthy of mention among such cases would be **Mohamed Morlu versus The Republic of Sierra Leone, Taako Tropical Hardwood Company Ltd versus The Republic of Sierra Leone, and Alhaji Samuel Sam-Sumana versus The Republic of Sierra Leone**, to name a few.
23. We continue to engage our legal professionals and explore the legal options available to us.

24. I would like to commend the efforts of the ECOWAS Court of Justice in promoting judicial cooperation, facilitating access to justice, and strengthening the rule of law in West Africa.
25. I urge all Member States to support the Court in its mandate fully and to implement its decisions in good faith.
26. We must also seize this opportunity to reflect on the progress we have made, identify the challenges that lie ahead, and chart a course towards a brighter future for the people of West Africa.
27. **My Lords and My Ladies**, it is with a profound sense of honour that I, on behalf of the Government and great people of Sierra Leone, declare this **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ECOWAS COURT OF JUSTICE** duly opened.
28. I once again extend my warmest welcome to all of you and wish you fruitful deliberations during this important Conference.
29. May our collective efforts lead to tangible outcomes that benefit the people of our region and uphold the noble ideals upon which ECOWAS was founded.

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.