



ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE, ON HIS ELECTION
AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AUTHORITY OF
ECOWAS HEADS OF STATE AND
GOVERNMENT
ABUJA, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
SUNDAY, JUNE 22ND 2025

- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES, COLLEAGUES, HEADS OF
STATE AND GOVERNMENT,**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

1. I am both humbled and grateful to accept the honour of chairing the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.
2. Thank you for placing your trust in me and in the Republic of Sierra Leone.

3. I accept this responsibility with full awareness of the magnitude of the task ahead and the complexity of the moment.
4. Let me begin by recognising the outstanding leadership of my predecessor and dear brother, **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu**.
5. Your tenure was marked by unwavering commitment to regional dialogue, economic recovery, and peace-building.
6. I am honoured to build upon the strong foundation you have established. Thank you for your exceptional leadership.

- 7. YOUR EXCELLENCIES**, as we gather here in June 2025, our region is at a crossroads.
- 8.** The West Africa we lead today is facing serious challenges — some long-standing, others new and evolving.
- 9.** We are still confronting insecurity in the Sahel and coastal states.
- 10.** Terrorism, political instability, illicit arms flows, and transnational organised crime continue to test the resilience of our nations and the effectiveness of our institutions.

- 11.** The democratic space is under strain.
- 12.** In parts of our region, the constitutional order has been disrupted.
- 13.** Yet, across West Africa, citizens — especially our youth — are demanding not just elections, but accountability, transparency, and a fair stake in national life.
- 14.** Economically, our region is recovering from external shocks, including global inflation, food insecurity, energy constraints, and debt vulnerabilities.

15. The effects of climate change — coastal erosion, floods, droughts — are no longer distant threats.

16. They are disrupting livelihoods today and demanding bold adaptation strategies and sustainable investments.

17. BUT THERE IS ALSO GREAT PROMISE.

18. Our vibrant and youthful population, abundant natural resources, and entrepreneurial spirit remain our strongest assets.

19. In this context, ECOWAS's mandate must be redefined — not as a distant institution but as a proactive, people-centred vehicle for peace, inclusion, and opportunity.

20. As Chair, I will prioritise FOUR KEY AREAS:

21. FIRST, RESTORING CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER AND DEEPENING DEMOCRACY.

22. We must engage transitional governments constructively and support Member States in building stronger democratic institutions rooted in the rule of law.

23. SECOND, REVITALISING REGIONAL SECURITY COOPERATION.

24. We must overhaul our collective security architecture — from intelligence sharing to rapid response — to confront new threats with unity and resolve.

25. THIRD, UNLOCKING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION.

26. The **ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme**, regional infrastructure, and cross-border value chains must become engines of jobs,

trade, and resilience, especially for women and youth.

27. FOURTH, BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL CREDIBILITY.

28. ECOWAS must reform itself and become more transparent, efficient, and responsive to its people's needs.

29. That is how we will rebuild trust in regional cooperation.

30. I believe West Africa's future is not one of decline, but of possibility — if we act with courage, unity, and moral clarity.

31. Let us rise to this moment together, not as separate nations, but as a united community of destiny.

32. Thank you, and may God bless our efforts and the West Africa region.