



OPENING STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. JULIUS MAADA BIO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
AND LEADER OF THE SIERRA LEONE PEOPLE'S
PARTY (SLPP)**

**ON THE OCCASION OF
THE NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE 2025**

WEDNESDAY 30TH JULY 2025

AT

**THE FREETOWN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE**

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

I. GREETINGS

- The Honourable Vice President and Deputy Leader,
- The Chairman of the PPRC,
- The SLPP National Chairman and members of the National Executive Council,
- Esteemed Delegates and Party Stakeholders,
- Fellow SLPP Members,
- Friends of our great Party,
- Good morning!
- ONE COUNTRY, ONE PEOPLE! ONE PEOPLE, ONE COUNTRY! S-L-P-P!

II. WELCOME REMARKS

- 1. It is with pride, purpose, and an unshakable commitment to our democratic ideals that I stand before you today as Leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party — the first, oldest, and most consequential political movement in our nation's history.**
- 2. I warmly welcome all delegates, members, aspirants, guests, supporters, and friends of the SLPP to this 2025 National Delegates Conference.**

3. We have convened here to **elect the remaining National Executive Members of our great Party** — a responsibility that demands our **integrity, unity, and vision.**
4. Before we proceed, I want to express sincere appreciation to our outgoing **National Executive Officers.**
5. Your leadership helped secure **decisive victories** in both the **2018 and 2023 General Elections.**

6. Chairman Prince Harding, to you and your **Executive Council**, we extend our deepest thanks.

7. You laid a **firm foundation**. Now it is our collective duty to **build upon it**.

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CONFERENCE

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

8. This two-day Conference will test our discipline, reflect our political maturity, honour our legacy, and define the future of our Party.

9. We gather not as factions, but as one family, united in purpose.

10. As we lay the groundwork for victory in the 2028 General Elections, let us remember — Sierra Leone is watching. The Region is watching. The World is watching.

IV. THE SLPP'S HISTORY AND VALUES

FELLOW MEMBERS,

11. As we gather today, I am reminded of our proud history, unwavering values, and the sacred responsibility we bear in guiding Sierra Leone towards a prosperous and united future.

12. Founded in 1951, the SLPP led our nation's journey to independence and governed with vision and integrity during our formative years.

13. The vision of our Founding Leaders, including Sir Milton Margai, Madam Ella Koblo Gulama, PC Bai Shebora Yumkella, and Banja Tejan-Sie, laid the groundwork for a united, democratic, and socially progressive Sierra Leone.

14. Rooted in social democratic principles,
the **SLPP** believes in providing equal
opportunity, protection, and access to
essential services like education and
healthcare for all citizens.

**15. Our Party is committed to economic
justice, accountable governance, and
people-first policies, which distinguishes
us from other political parties in Sierra
Leone.**

**16. Throughout generations, our social
democratic heritage guides us, serving as
both our moral compass and guardrail.**

FELLOW MEMBERS,

17. Sixty-four years later, we must carry on this legacy with a sacred responsibility.

18. TO OUR YOUNG AND NEW MEMBERS:

Wear the green with pride. Live our values and carry forward the legacy of our Founding Leaders.

19. TO OUR ELDERS: Let us lead by example, passing on the core values that established this formidable Party.

20. As Members and Delegates of this historic Party, **we must not only participate in democracy — we must lead it.**

21. We must set the gold standard for democratic conduct.

22. Our history demands it, and our people expect nothing less.

23. As the Ruling Party, we must lead not only in Government but also in character and conduct, especially during this defining moment.

V. CALL FOR UNITY AND INTEGRITY

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

24. As you prepare to cast your votes, let the enduring values of the SLPP — **unity, service, and democratic integrity** — guide your conscience.

25. Politics is not war. Debate is not destruction. Disagreement is not betrayal.

26. We are a Party of **ideas, not enmity; a movement united by purpose, not divided by ego.**

27. There must be **no room for intimidation; no tolerance for insults; no reward for coercion.**

28. Let this be a **contest of character, not chaos; of vision, not vitriol.**

29. We must build a political culture of **calm strength, not insults; maturity, not manipulation; service, not self-promotion.**

30. This is the **SLPP** our Founders imagined.
This is the standard I have upheld — and this is the standard we must now defend.

VI. PERSONAL LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

31. In every contest, there will be **winners and losers. What defines us is how we respond.**

32. As your Leader, I know firsthand both the **joy of victory and the pain of loss.**

33. I have **contested and lost elections.** I have **contested and won elections.** Through it all, I remained **loyal to this Party.**

34. In 2005, I sought the **SLPP Flagbearership**
— and lost.

35. In 2011, I was **elected as Flagbearer**
among nineteen candidates and became
the Leader of our great Party.

36. I chose a former opponent, the late **Dr. Kadie**
Sesay, as my running mate. May her
beautiful soul rest in eternal peace.

37. **Aunty Kadie** and I **campaignned together in**
unity. We were declared the losers in the
2012 General Elections, and **we moved**
forward together with dignity.

38. I did not walk away from the Party. I did not burn bridges.

39. I chose to serve, to build alliances, and to remain in the SLPP.

40. Because politics done right is not about who wins today — it is about who serves always.

41. In 2017, I was once again elected as the SLPP Flagbearer. This time, I won the 2018 General Elections as the leader of the opposition party, and in 2023, I successfully led our party to a second five-year term in office.

42. I share **these victories and defeats** with you
because **I know the weight of ambition and**
the vulnerability of entrusting your fate to
others.

43. Above ambition, above strategy, and above
support — **Leadership comes from the**
ALMIGHTY GOD.

VII. PEACE AND INTEGRITY IN LEADERSHIP

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

**44. I have always chosen the high road—
because leadership demands humility in
victory and grace in defeat.**

**45. No political ambition is worth the peace of
our Party or the life of any Sierra Leonean.**

**46. I reaffirm today: my ambition — and yours
— must never come at the cost of our
nation's peace.**

47. As your **Leader**, I have never resorted to **intimidation, violence, or invective —** because **true leadership earns trust; it does not force submission.**

48. This is the legacy I want for our Party: **no violence, no coercion, and a process of unquestionable credibility.**

49. As you vote, remember leadership is **not about age or titles — it is about character, vision, and service.**

50. Let the best among us rise. Let the rest of us lift them up.

DISTINGUISH DELEGATES,

51. Although I am a man of few words, **no one speaks for me but me.**

52. I have not endorsed any candidate because I believe in a **fair contest where the will of the delegates prevails.**

53. I respect every candidate, welcome their nominations, and wish them well.

54. May the best candidates win **fairly and honourably.**

VIII. REGIONAL LEADERSHIP & DEMOCRACY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

55. The conduct and outcome of this Conference are vital for our legacy.

56. As Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government — the first Sierra Leonean to hold that honour — I am held to the highest standard.

57. Our Party must meet that standard. Our country must rise to it.

58. One of my top priorities as the Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government is to restore constitutional order and deepen democracy across the region.

59. That work must begin at home.

60. We cannot preach democracy abroad and fail to practice it here.

61. We cannot demand constitutional order elsewhere and sow discord here.

62. The SLPP must lead by example as moral guarantors of democracy in West Africa.

63. Let this **National Elective Delegate Conference** prove that **leadership is earned, not imposed.**

64. That the will of the delegates is **sacred.**

65. That the outcome is **legitimate.**

66. That our next **National Executive Council** emerges with both **mandate and merit.**

IX. LOOKING FORWARD & CALL TO ACTION

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

67. As you vote, ask yourselves: Who can unite our ranks?

68. Who can deliver the dividends of democracy to our people?

69. Who can help lead us to an unprecedented third straight national victory in 2028?

70. No party in Sierra Leone has ever done this.

71. We are on the cusp of history. Let us not be the authors of our own undoing.

72. There must be no space for **blackmail, fake news, slander, or social media warfare.**

73. The **National Executives** must be chosen for their **proven track record of service** to **the Party** and **people** — not slogans or rhetoric.

74. In recent elections, **harsh rhetoric has hurt us.** Let us **dial it down.**

75. We cannot **win 2028** if we **break ourselves apart in 2025.**

76. From this Delegates Conference, we must emerge stronger, not weaker; healed, not wounded.

77. TO THOSE WHO WOULD WIN, I SAY: Be magnanimous. Have the wisdom to unite and the courage to embrace your opponents.

78. TO THOSE WHO WOULD NOT WIN, I SAY: Be gracious. Have the courage to bridge divides and work for the common good of our Party.

**79. TO ALL OF US, let us remain loyal to the
Party, to its leadership, to our people, and
to the promise of a more prosperous
Sierra Leone.**

X. 2028 FLAGBEARER & LEADER OF SLPP

**MY DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF THE
SLPP,**

80. I now come to the **all-important question of
our next Flagbearer.**

81. At the appointed time, and in **full
accordance with our Party Constitution**
and cherished democratic traditions, we will
select the **next Leader of our great Party to
contest the 2028 Presidential and General
Elections.**

82. We all know that there can only be **ONE**
FLAGBEARER — the one whom the
ALMIGHTY GOD has already anointed, to
be revealed in His own perfect time.

83. Let me go on record — **clearly and publicly**
— before this noble gathering: **I, Julius**
Maada Bio, have not endorsed any
candidate at this stage of my second-term
mandate.

84. And let me also state, **without ambiguity or**
hesitation: I harbour no presidential
ambition beyond my current mandate to
serve the people of Sierra Leone.

FELLOW MEMBERS,

85. 2025 is not the time for division, speculation, or distraction.

86. This is the time to tighten our belts and return to the trenches of nation-building.

87. We must stand as one united SLPP family, fully committed to delivering the democratic dividends that our people expect — and deserve.

88. Our focus must be clear. Our energy must be disciplined. Our purpose must be unified.

89. We must faithfully execute the second five-year mandate that the people have entrusted to us.

90. That is our immediate task. That is our solemn duty.

91. To the leadership, members, and loyal supporters of our Party, I sincerely thank you for the trust you have given me throughout my leadership journey with the SLPP.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

92. I urge us all — let us not be distracted by
premature ambitions.

93. Let us stay focused on the real work of
nation-building.

94. We must deliver on our **National
Development Priorities.**

95. We must raise the **standard of living** for
every Sierra Leonean.

96. And we must do so with **humility, urgency,**
and **unity.**

97. Only then shall we earn the moral right to return to the people in 2028 and seek their renewed trust at the ballot box.

98. And when that time comes, the Flagbearer we choose must be more than a candidate.

99. They must be a true servant of the people, a symbol of our SLPP values.

100. The Flagbearer must possess:

- **The skill set to win the General Elections.**
- **The maturity to heal divisions.**
- **The wisdom to reach across factions.**
- **The courage to embrace opponents.**

- And the **proven record and natural ability to lead this Party — and our nation — forward.**

XI. MESSAGE TO THE MAIN OPPOSITION PARTY

FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,

101. Let me also address our brothers and sisters in the main opposition — the **All-People's Congress (APC).**

102. You, too, will soon hold **your leadership elections.**

103. I urge you to keep the process clean and fair.

104. Honour your internal democracy and the peace of our nation.

105. We may differ in vision and compete in elections, but we must stand together on one sacred ground: the peace, unity and stability of Sierra Leone.

106. As President, I remain firmly committed to good governance and the foundational values of democracy.

XII. CLOSING REMARKS

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

107. As I close, let me reassert: **this Conference is more than just a National Executive election.**

108. It is a moment **to define the future of a Party** that has always been the **beacon of democracy in Sierra Leone.**

109. As our **Founding Leader, Sir Milton Margai**, once said: **(I QUOTE)** *"We must all do our duty and work for the unity of our country. We must work together in mutual understanding, respect, and tolerance."* **(END QUOTE)**

110. Let us honour that call.

111. Let us choose our leaders wisely.

112. Let us act honourably at all times.

113. Let us lead courageously.

114. Together, we will write the next chapter of the SLPP's proud history.

115. Together, we will continue to move Sierra Leone forward.

116. I wish you all a peaceful, successful, and historic 2025 National Delegates Conference.

117. I thank the Independent Electoral Management and Oversight Committee for overseeing the elections.

118. I thank the **Organising Committee** for their dedication and hard work in organising this conference.

119. May **God** bless the **SLPP**.

120. May **God** bless **Sierra Leone** and her people.

121. **ONE COUNTRY, ONE PEOPLE! ONE PEOPLE, ONE COUNTRY! S-L-P-P!**

THANK YOU!