KEYNOTE STATEMENT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY JULIUS MAADA BIO,

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

AT THE ANNUAL G7+ HIGH-LEVEL SUMMIT

ON THE MARGINS OF THE HIGH-LEVEL WEEK OF

THE 80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UNHQ, CR 5

23RD SEPTEMBER 2025

- **Excellencies, Colleague Heads of State and Government,**
- **Madam Chair of the g7+,**
- **Honourable Ministers,**
- **Secretary-General of the g7+,**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I am deeply honoured to address this **annual g7+ High-Level Summit**, especially as we commemorate a decade of Sierra Leone's stewardship of our organisation.

2. For my country, this moment carries profound symbolism.

3. Barely two decades after the end of our civil conflict, Sierra Leone stands not only as a nation that has rebuilt from the ashes of war, but as a leader entrusted with guiding a global coalition once labelled as fragile.

4. We have proven that fragility is not a destiny, but a condition that can be overcome — with the right tools, trust, and time.

5. From the very beginning, Sierra Leone joined the g7+ with conviction. We knew that development must be country-led and rooted in national ownership.

6. Our own recovery journey — through dialogue, disarmament, reconciliation, governance reform, and institutional rebuilding — taught us that peace and prosperity cannot be imposed from outside.

7. This conviction gave birth to **the founding principle of the g7+: *no decisions about us, without us*.**

8. Over the past decade, our coalition has transformed this principle into practice.

9. Together, we championed **the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States in 2011** — the first global compact to place fragile countries in the driver's seat of their recovery.

10. We secured **Sustainable Development Goal 16**, elevating peaceful, just, and inclusive societies as a global aspiration.

11. We attained **Observer Status at the United Nations General Assembly in 2019**, formalising our role in shaping international policy.

12. In 2024, during Sierra Leone's presidency of the Security Council, the g7+ delivered its first-ever statement in the Security Council.

13. Today, our voices are no longer marginal — they are recognised and actively sought in debates on peacebuilding, development financing, and global governance reform.

14. Sierra Leone's decade of chairmanship has been defined by solidarity, innovation, and results.

15. Together with **Timor-Leste**, we have convened annual high-level summits on the margins of the UN General Assembly.

16. In 2024, we hosted senior officials and ministers in Freetown, reaffirming our shared commitment to sovereign development.

17. Through ***fragile-to-fragile cooperation***, we have supported one another in transitions, elections, peace processes, and health crises.

18. These acts of solidarity embody the unique power of the g7+: **those who have lived in fragility are best placed to guide others out of it.**

19. While we celebrate our accomplishments, we must acknowledge that the challenges ahead are significant.

20. Our nations continue to face the existential threats of climate change, the crushing weight of unsustainable debt, the shocks of pandemics, and the turbulence of geopolitical rivalries.

21. These challenges demand that the next chapter of the g7+ be anchored in sovereign development and strategic unity.

22. We must insist that our development pathways are charted by our people, not prescribed by others.

23. We must demand financing that is predictable, fair, and accessible to fragile contexts.

24. We must stand united in advocating for climate justice, debt relief, and an inclusive international order.

25. As **Sierra Leone now passes the baton of leadership to the Solomon Islands**, we do so with deep pride and full confidence.

26. Our decade of service has demonstrated that fragile countries can lead, not follow; that our lived experiences are assets, not liabilities; and that together, our voices can influence the global system.

27. I wish to extend profound appreciation to **Timor-Leste** for its generous hosting and steadfast support to the Secretariat.

28. I warmly congratulate **President José Manuel Ramos-Horta**, his Government, and the people of **Timor-Leste** for the successful hosting of the **2025 Ministerial Meeting in Dili**.

29. Excellencies, **the g7+ was born out of struggle, but it has matured into a symbol of hope.**

30. Our scars have become strategies. Our unity has become strength. And our vision is unwavering: **no country should be left behind simply because its journey began from a place of fragility.**

31. As we enter a new chapter, let us recommit to our **founding principle — *no decisions about us, without us*.**

32. Let the G7+ continue to serve as a symbol of resilience, solidarity, and sovereign development.

33. The challenges we face are great, but together, we are even stronger.

I THANK YOU.