



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR JULIUS MAADA BIO
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
CHAIR OF THE ECOWAS AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF
STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE
120TH ANNIVERSARY OF GOVERNMENT
SECONDARY SCHOOL, BO (BO SCHOOL)**

**AND THE
97TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OLD BO BOYS'
ASSOCIATION (OBBA)**

FRIDAY, APRIL 03, 2026

- **THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL, BO,**
- **THE PRINCIPAL, REV. HASSAN KAINESIE, AND THE STAFF OF BO SCHOOL,**
- **THE EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE OLD BO BOYS' ASSOCIATION,**
- **MY FELLOW ALUMNI,**
- **THE DYNAMIC STUDENTS OF BO SCHOOL,**
- **PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,**
- **INVITED GUESTS,**
- **GOOD AFTERNOON.**

1. Happy Good Friday to my fellow Christians.

2. It is always a privilege to return here among brothers, on familiar ground, in a place that has shaped not only what we became but how we became it.
3. This gathering is part of our yearly tradition.
4. But this year carries a deeper significance as we mark **120 years of our beloved Bo School.**
5. **I am 3919, Julius Maada Bio, a proud Bo School Boy.**
6. And I remain, always, a Bo School Boy.

- 7. Bo School does not only produce educated men; it produces men who shape nations.**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

8. For 120 years, this institution has endured through change and challenge, and across generations, remaining constant in its purpose to form men of discipline, character, and leadership.

9. But no institution sustains itself.

It is people who sustain institutions.

10. So on this 120th Anniversary, **we honour the founding visionaries** who established this school with foresight and purpose.

11. We **recognise past and present principals, teachers, staff and the Board of Governors** for their stewardship, sacrifice, and commitment.

12. We **commend the Executive Members of OBBA, past and present**, for preserving this legacy and carrying it forward.

13. And to **our Old Bo Boys** from across Sierra Leone and the diaspora, **we welcome you home.**

14. We stand here today because of all of you.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

15. As we mark this milestone, **the theme of this 120th Anniversary, “Celebrating a Rich Legacy and Inspiring Generations,”** is both a reflection and a call to action.

16. Legacy is not something we inherit passively.

17. It is a trust we are called to protect, strengthen, and pass forward better than we found it.

18. For our students, this is a challenge.

19. You are part of something greater than yourselves, a tradition that calls you to rise, to lead, and to carry that standard forward.

20. For our alumni, it is a responsibility, to invest in this institution, to mentor its students, and to ensure that Bo School remains strong for generations to come.

21. The future of Bo School will not be secured by admiration alone, but by deliberate investment, structured mentorship, and sustained responsibility.

22. And for Sierra Leone, it is a reminder of something fundamental.

23. When institutions build character, they do not simply produce graduates; they produce the future of a nation.

24. Institutions like Bo School do not only serve Sierra Leone, **but they also help shape leadership across our region and our continent.**

25. Let me, at this juncture, **recognise and speak to the parents and guardians.**

- 26.** You are the first teachers, the first example of discipline, responsibility, and values for these young men.
- 27.** The foundation you lay at home is what this institution builds upon.
- 28.** It is within that partnership between home and school that the meaning of our motto comes alive: **“Manners Maketh Man.”**
- 29.** Because manners are not only about courtesy. They are also about **discipline in conduct, integrity in decision-making, and responsibility in leadership.**

30. They are formed through consistency, at home, in school, and in the choices made every day.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

31. As students here, we learned early that this school was not only about what you learned but about who you became.

32. I still remember the discipline of early mornings, the expectations that allowed no excuses, and the quiet understanding that here, standards were not negotiable.

33. Standards were not optional. They were expected.

34. Here, I learned that how you carry yourself and how you conduct yourself matter.

35. In recognition of my character, I was made **Prefect of Discipline** and later awarded the Principal's Proficiency Prize for good conduct in my final year.

36. Today, I stand here humbled to be **the first President of the Republic of Sierra Leone** to come from this school, a testament to what this institution makes possible.

37. At the heart of that formation is a simple but enduring truth: **MANNERS MAKETH MAN.**

38. In this school, character is not an accessory to success; it is the foundation.

39. Because in the end, positions may define what we do, but **character defines who we are.**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

40. Bo School is part of Sierra Leone's nation-building architecture.

41. If we get institutions like Bo School right, **we get Sierra Leone right.**

42. Because **the excellence in education and character development nurtured here** contributes directly to the kind of nation we are building.

43. Our progress depends not only on policy, but on **the quality of people we produce.**

44. At this stage of my public service, my focus is clear: **to strengthen institutions, expand opportunity, and ensure that what we build today will endure beyond us.**

45. If, in my time of service, I have contributed in any way to strengthening these foundations, then that service has been meaningful.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

46. The **Old Bo Boys' Association** is more than an alumni network; it is **a community of shared responsibility.**

47. I commend the work already being done by members, both individually and collectively.

48. But the next phase must go further.

49. We must **move from support to structured impact**, where **mentorship is institutionalised**, **engagement is deliberate**, and **excellence is scaled.**

50. Because this school was not built in 1906 to produce ordinary men. It was **built to shape leaders.**

51. Leadership defined not by privilege, but by character; not by entitlement, but by responsibility.

52. That is the legacy we must preserve for the next 120 years.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

53. Today, we celebrate excellence.

54. We recognise the young men who will receive prizes and awards.

55. But my message is to every student seated here.

56. Strive to be the very best version of yourself, not for recognition alone, but for purpose.

57. Because the future of Sierra Leone will not be built by chance. It will be built by character.

58. Sitting here today are future leaders, builders, and custodians of our nation.

59. TO THE YOUNG MEN SEATED HERE TODAY:

60. This school will shape you. It will test you.

61. It will demand more from you than you think you can give.

62. Do not resist that process. Embrace it.

63. Among you sits a future President of our great Republic, or a future Chairman of the Sierra Leone People's Party.

64. But what determines who rises to become productive citizens is not chance or talent alone.

65. It is discipline, character, and the choices you make, starting now.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

FELLOW ALUMNI AND STUDENTS,

66. As we mark 120 years of the best school in the world, let this be more than a celebration.

67. Let it be a recommitment to discipline, to excellence, to service, and above all, to character.

68. Because what we build today must outlast us.

69. And what we celebrate today is not only 120 years of history, but the responsibility of the next 120 years.

70. The decisions we make now will determine what Bo School represents not just in the next century, but beyond it.

71. Long after titles fade and positions change, one truth will remain. **WE WILL ALWAYS BE BO SCHOOL BOYS.**

72. And in the end, **MANNERS MAKETH MAN.**

73. May we have **the wisdom to build well, and the discipline to sustain what we build.**

74. I wish you all a memorable celebration.

75. Happy Easter to all my Christian brothers and sisters.

76. I am 3919, Julius Maada Bio.

77. Thank you for your attention.