



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

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HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING OF THE
NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY
(NatCA) HEADQUARTERS
FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026**

- **FELLOW SIERRA LEONEANS,**
- **MINISTERS AND DEPUTY MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT,**
- **HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,**
- **MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,**
- **DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS,**
- **HEADS OF AGENCIES,**
- **LEADERSHIP AND STAFF OF THE NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AUTHORITY,**
- **MOBILE NETWORK OPERATORS AND INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS,**
- **DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**
- **GOOD MORNING.**

I. THE OPENING — A MOMENT THAT BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE

- 1.** Not long ago, a young woman from Kailahun travelled to Freetown to register a business.

- 2.** Not because the process required her physical presence in the capital.

- 3.** But because the systems were not in place to serve her where she was.

4. She spent two days, money she had saved for months, and time she could not afford, for a transaction that should have taken twenty minutes.
5. Her story is not unusual. It is Sierra Leone's story.
6. **And it is the story that this building is written to change.**
7. Today, we do not simply commission a Headquarters.

8. We commission a promise, that the Sierra Leone of tomorrow will work for that young woman in Kailahun, for the fisherman in Tombo, for the student in Makeni, for the nurse in Kenema, and for every citizen who has ever been told, in one way or another, **that modern services, modern systems, and modern opportunity were not yet meant for them.**
9. **That ends here. That ends today.**

II. A JOURNEY TEN YEARS IN THE MAKING

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

10. To understand why this moment matters, we must be honest about the full journey that brought us here, because this building did not begin with us, and its completion deserves to be told truthfully.

11. The foundations of this Headquarters were laid in 2016, under the previous administration.

12. That decision, to invest in a permanent home for the **National Communications Authority**, was the right one, and we acknowledge it as such.

13. Good decisions for Sierra Leone do not belong to any single party or government. They belong to the nation.

14. When our Government came into office in 2018, we inherited this project mid-construction.

15. We assessed it. We committed to it. And we continued the work, because a project that serves the people of Sierra Leone deserves to be finished, regardless of who started it.

16. And then the world stopped in 2020.

17. COVID-19 did not spare Sierra Leone. It disrupted supply chains, stalled construction timelines, constrained budgets, and redirected the resources of governments everywhere toward an invisible and relentless enemy.

- 18.** What we had hoped to complete sooner was delayed, not by indifference, not by neglect, but by a global crisis that none of us anticipated and all of us had to survive.
- 19.** But here is what I want every Sierra Leonean to understand: **our SLPP Government did not abandon this project.**
- 20.** Through a pandemic, through economic pressure, through every obstacle that stood between a foundation laid in 2016 and a completed facility in 2026, we kept going.

21. Ten years. Two administrations. One pandemic. And one shared destination.

22. That is the story of this building. And I believe it is also the story of Sierra Leone, a nation that has faced more than its share of setbacks, but has never once stopped building toward its future.

23. Today, that perseverance is rewarded.

III. WHERE WE HAVE COME FROM

24. A decade ago, Sierra Leone's digital infrastructure was fragile, fragmented, and largely inaccessible to the majority of our people.

25. Internet penetration was among the lowest in the region.

26. Government data was scattered, insecure, and poorly managed.

- 27.** Regulatory oversight of our communications sector was constrained by the absence of the very tools needed to do the job.
- 28.** Rural communities were, and in too many places still are, effectively invisible to the digital economy.
- 29.** We inherited a country rich in people, rich in resources, and rich in potential, but chronically underserved by the infrastructure that unlocks that potential.

30. We made a choice. We chose to build. Not to renovate the margins. Not to patch what was broken.

31. But to construct, deliberately and ambitiously, **the foundations of a digitally sovereign, digitally inclusive Sierra Leone.**

32. This Headquarters is one expression of that choice. A visible, permanent, and hard-won expression.

IV. WHAT WE ARE COMMISSIONING AND WHY IT MATTERS TO YOU

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

33. Let me speak plainly, not to the diplomats or the technocrats, but to every Sierra Leonean within the sound of my voice.

34. This building houses two facilities that will change how this country works.

35. The **first is the National Data Centre.**

36. For years, the data that runs our government, health records, tax systems, civil registration, and financial data has been stored in ways that are vulnerable, inefficient, and in some cases, entirely inadequate.

37. The **National Data Centre** changes that.

38. It means your information is protected.

39. It means Government services can be delivered faster, more reliably, and more securely.

40. It means Sierra Leone owns and controls its own digital assets, because a nation that cannot manage its own data cannot truly govern itself.

41. Digital sovereignty is not a technical term. It is a matter of national dignity.

42. The second is the Network Operating and Communications Monitoring Centre.

43. As mobile money, digital banking, and online services expand across our country, citizens need the assurance that someone is watching, that the systems they trust with their money, their data, and their livelihoods are being properly regulated and protected.

44. This Centre is that assurance. It strengthens **NatCA's** capacity to oversee, to enforce, and to protect, so that the growth of our digital economy benefits consumers, not just corporations.

45. Together, these are not facilities. **They are instruments of justice, technological justice, for a people who have waited long enough.**

V. THE VISION — SIERRA LEONE IN TEN YEARS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

46. I want you to imagine for a moment a prosperous Sierra Leone in 2036.

47. Imagine a country where a student in Pujehun can access the same quality of educational content as a student in Freetown, not one day, not eventually, but as a matter of course.

48. Imagine a farmer in Tonkolili who receives real-time market prices on his phone, connects directly with buyers, and processes payments without travelling to a bank branch.

49. Imagine a pregnant woman in a rural health clinic in Falaba whose records are instantly accessible to the specialist in the city, whose referral is processed digitally, and whose care is not compromised by paperwork or distance.

50. Imagine a young entrepreneur in Bo who builds a technology company, employs twenty people, serves clients across West Africa, and never once feels that her geography is a ceiling on her ambition.

**51. That Sierra Leone is not a fantasy. It is a plan.
And this building is part of that plan.**

52. But I will say this with equal clarity: **that Sierra Leone will not build itself.**

53. It requires sustained investment. It requires accountable institutions. It requires political will that outlasts election cycles.

54. And it requires every one of us, in government, in the private sector, in civil society, and in our communities, to play our part.

VI. OUR COMMITMENTS — WHAT WE WILL DELIVER

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

55. Inspiration without accountability is just rhetoric.

56. So let me be specific about what this Government commits to deliver.

57. Within the next two years, we will work to ensure that government services anchored in this **data centre** are accessible to citizens in every district, not just in Freetown.

58. We will accelerate the expansion of broadband infrastructure to underserved communities, because a data centre in the capital means nothing to a community with no connectivity.

59. We will invest in training the next generation of Sierra Leonean technologists, because **the most important infrastructure in any digital economy is human.**

60. We will strengthen NatCA's mandate and resources, so that regulation keeps pace with innovation and consumers are always protected.

61. And we will measure our progress publicly, because accountability to the people of Sierra Leone is not optional.

62. It is the condition on which we hold this office.

VII. THE CHALLENGES WE ACKNOWLEDGE

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

63. I will not stand here and pretend that this commissioning resolves every challenge.

64. Power supply remains a constraint. Without reliable electricity, even the best digital infrastructure underperforms.

65. We are working on it, and we will not rest until energy access matches our digital ambitions.

- 66.** The digital divide between urban and rural Sierra Leone is real.
- 67.** Too many of our people remain on the wrong side of connectivity.
- 68.** This facility helps, but it is one piece of a much larger puzzle that we are committed to completing.
- 69. Affordability is a barrier.** Data costs remain too high for too many Sierra Leoneans.

70. We are in active dialogue with service providers and partners to drive costs down and access up.

71. We acknowledge these gaps not to diminish this moment, but because honest leadership demands that we name what we are still fighting to fix.

VIII. THE CALL — TO EVERY STAKEHOLDER

72. To the leadership and staff of NatCA: You

now occupy one of the most important institutions in this country's digital future.

73. This facility is not your achievement. It is your responsibility. Serve with professionalism.

74. Regulate without fear or favour. Innovate constantly.

75. And never lose sight of the citizens whose lives depend on how well you do your work.

76. To our **mobile network operators and internet**

service providers: You are partners in a national project, not simply businesses operating in a market.

77. We expect sustainable investment. We expect expansion.

78. We expect you to reach the communities that are hardest to reach, because that is where the need is greatest.

79. Sierra Leone's growth is your growth. Act accordingly and keep your prices fair for our citizens.

80. To our **development partners:** Your support has been invaluable. We are grateful.

81. And we invite your continued collaboration, not as donors and recipients, but as genuine partners in building a country that will one day be a model for digital transformation across our region.

82. To our **young people**: This building was built with you in mind.

83. The digital economy is your economy. The opportunities it creates are yours to seize.

84. But you must prepare. You must study. You must build skills. You must be ready, because the future does not wait, and neither should you.

85. And to every **ordinary Sierra Leonean**, the trader, the teacher, the farmer, the mother, the mechanic, the student: This is yours.

86. Everything we build, every institution we strengthen, every system we improve, is for you.

87. Never let anyone tell you otherwise. And never stop demanding that your Government delivers on the promise of a Sierra Leone that works for everyone.

IX. THE CLOSING — OUR DEFINING MOMENT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

88. There is a phrase I have carried with me through my years of public service: **a nation becomes what it builds.**

89. When we build roads, we become a country that moves.

90. When we build schools, we become a country that learns.

91. When we build hospitals, we become a country that heals.

92. And when we build institutions like this, institutions anchored in sovereignty, accountability, and the genuine desire to serve, we become a country that governs itself with dignity.

93. This building took ten years to reach completion.

94. Ten years marked by transitions of power, by the devastation of a global pandemic, by financial pressure, and by the ordinary but relentless friction of building anything worthwhile in a developing nation.

95. It would have been easy, at any point along that journey, to quietly abandon this project, to redirect the funds, to let the foundation sit unfinished as so many foundations in so many countries have.

96. We did not. And that matters.

97. Because what this building represents, beyond its walls and its servers and its systems, is something far more important: **the capacity of Sierra Leone to persist.**

98. To honour commitments that predate us. To finish what was started. To keep faith with the future even when the present is hard.

99. Sierra Leone has known hardship. We have known conflict.

100. We have known the particular frustration of a nation whose potential has too often exceeded its reality.

101. But we have also always known resilience. We have always known the capacity to rise.

102. Today, we rise again.

103. Not with words alone. But with infrastructure, with institutions, and with an unshakeable commitment to the people of this country.

104. This is our defining moment, not because of what we are commissioning, but because of what we are declaring: **that Sierra Leone belongs to its people, that its future will be built by its people, and that no Sierra Leonean will be left behind in the country we are building together.**

105. I want to commend the leadership and staff of NatCA for their hard work and dedication in bringing us to this point.

106. Let us continue to work together to ensure that the benefits of this progress reach every part of our country.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

107. It is now **my honour and privilege to officially declare the Headquarters of the National Communications Authority duly commissioned.**

108. May it serve every single Sierra Leonean, in every district, in every community, in every home.

109. May it stand as proof of what we can achieve when we dare to build with purpose, and the courage to keep building when the road gets hard.

110. May God bless the **National Communications Authority (NatCA).**

111. And may God bless the **Republic of Sierra Leone.**

THANK YOU.