



## **STATEMENT**

**BY**

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

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL VIENNA CLIMATE AND ENERGY  
CONFERENCE**

**THE HOFBURG PALACE  
VIENNA, AUSTRIA  
THURSDAY, APRIL 09, 2026**

- **YOUR EXCELLENCIES,**
- **DIRECTOR GENERAL OF UNIDO,**
- **DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

1. Let me begin by thanking the **Government of Austria and UNIDO** for convening us at a moment when the question before us is no longer technical, but strategic: **how we power prosperity, secure our economies, and stabilise our future.**
  
2. I also **commend the ambition behind the Vienna Call to Action.**

3. What will matter now is not only what we agree — but **what we are prepared to implement, at speed and at scale.**
  
4. **The energy transition will not be judged by how much power we generate — but by where value is created, who captures it, and how many lives it transforms.**
  
5. **Prosperity, security, and stability** are not separate ambitions.
  
6. They are **development outcomes that rise or fall together.**

7. **Prosperity** comes from creating value within our economies.
8. **Security** comes from reducing our exposure to external shocks.
9. **Stability** comes from building systems that can endure pressure and sustain growth.
10. Today, all three are under strain.
11. We are navigating a world of rising geopolitical tension, tighter capital, and more frequent shocks.

- 12.** Across many economies — especially in Africa — these pressures are feeding inflation, narrowing fiscal space, and slowing investment.
- 13.** However, Africa continues to grow, and its resilience is evident.
- 14.** So, **the question is not whether opportunity exists. The question is whether the model is fit for purpose.**
- 15.** **Africa will not be the warehouse of the global energy transition.**

**16. Our Continent will be a centre of value creation and industrial growth.** That is the position we are advancing.

**17. As the Chairman of ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government,** I speak for a region that is organising itself differently — with greater coherence, scale, and intent.

**18.** West Africa is positioning itself as an integrated and investable economic space, where policy alignment, infrastructure connectivity, and market scale come together to support long-term investment.

- 19.** This shift is already underway. Regulatory frameworks are being aligned. Cross-border infrastructure is being prioritised. Fragmentation is being reduced.
- 20.** At the centre of this transformation are development corridors.
- 21.** When properly structured, they connect resources to energy, transport, processing, and export.
- 22.** They retain value within the region, strengthen economic security, and reduce exposure to external volatility.

**23.** For **Sierra Leone and our Mano River Union partners — Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Liberia**

— this presents an immediate and practical opportunity.

**24.** A coordinated industrial corridor linking mining zones to shared rail, reliable energy, processing capacity, and ports such as Conakry and Freetown can support aluminium refining, steel production, and downstream industries.

**25.** We are positioning this corridor as a competitive, investment-ready platform for partners seeking scale, stability, and long-term value — anchored in local value creation.

## **EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

**26.** At the national level, Sierra Leone is aligning policy with delivery.

**27. Energy sits at the centre of this strategy.** It powers industry, drives agriculture, creates jobs, and underpins both economic and national security.

**28.** Through **Mission 300**, in partnership with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, we have developed a **\$2.2 billion Energy Compact to expand access, scale clean energy, and crowd in private capital.**

**29.** Our targets are ambitious, but achievable:

We will increase electricity access from **36 percent to 78 percent by 2030**, expand clean cooking access from **1.5 percent to 25 percent**, and mobilise over **US\$1.4 billion in private sector investment**.

**30.** We are **investing across the full energy value**

**chain — from generation and transmission to last-mile connections and off-grid solutions — with a clear goal of achieving 50 percent off-grid access by 2030**, ensuring no community is left behind.

**31.** At the same time, we are strengthening regulatory clarity, improving project preparation, and deploying targeted incentives to accelerate renewable energy and clean cooking markets.

**32. For us, this is not just about megawatts.** It is about whether a young person can find a job at home, whether businesses can operate reliably, and whether opportunity is built where people already live.

- 33.** Sierra Leone offers a stable, reform-oriented environment, with a clear pipeline of energy and industrial projects ready for development.
- 34.** We are positioning ourselves as a strategic entry point within **the Mano River Union corridor**, with access to key resources, ports, and regional markets.
- 35.** We are seeking partners who bring capital, technology, and execution capacity.

- 36.** Partners ready to scale bankable projects, strengthen value chains, and deliver real industrial growth.
- 37.** And we are ready to structure partnerships that are transparent, commercially viable, and anchored in long-term value.
- 38.** At the same time, we are aligning climate ambition with investment.
- 39.** Our **third-generation Nationally Determined Contribution** is not a standalone commitment — it is directly linked to economic transformation.

**40.** Delivery is under presidential oversight to ensure coordination, speed, and accountability.

**41. If the model is clear and the opportunities are real, then the remaining question is straightforward: can capital meet them at the scale and speed required?**

**42.** Too many viable projects across Africa do not reach financial close.

**43.** Capital remains expensive. Risk perception remains high. Financing instruments are often misaligned with project realities.

**44. Europe has both the capital and the strategic interest to partner in building resilient, value-creating energy systems across Africa.**

**45.** The opportunity now is to align that interest with execution.

**46.** If we are serious about **prosperity, security, and stability**, then climate finance must become more accessible, more affordable, and more responsive to the needs of developing economies.

## **EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

**47.** Within the next twelve months, we will bring to financial close a first set of cross-border energy and industrial corridor projects under ECOWAS — demonstrating that regional integration can move from policy to execution.

**48.** Later this year, as **Chairman of ECOWAS**, I will convene the **West Africa Integration and Investment Summit**.

**49.** This will not be a forum for declarations.

- 50. It will be a platform for execution** — bringing forward a pipeline of bankable, cross-border projects in energy, agribusiness, strategic minerals, and digital infrastructure.
- 51.** We are ready to co-invest. We are ready to de-risk. We are ready to deliver.
- 52.** We invite partners to engage with us not only as financiers, but as co-investors in platforms that create scale, stability, and long-term value.

**53.** The future of the global energy transition will not be defined by resources alone, but by where value is created — and who is prepared to build it.

**54. West Africa is ready. We are building the conditions for prosperity, strengthening the foundations of security, and delivering the stability that investment requires.**

**55.** And in doing so, we stand ready to support a **Vienna Call to Action that is not only ambitious but implementable.**

**56. Those who move early will not only participate in this future — they will define it.**

**57. Thank you for your attention.**