



TALKING POINTS FOR HIS EXCELLENCY

JULIUS MAADA BIO

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

PRESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS COMMITTEE MEETING

STATE HOUSE, FREETOWN

10TH SEPTEMBER 2026 | 1:00 P.M.

1) OPENING COURTESIES

- THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR AND DEPAC CO-CHAIRS;
 - MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT;
 - ESTEEMED AMBASSADORS AND HIGH COMMISSIONERS;
 - HEADS OF BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS;
 - SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS;
 - DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:
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- I warmly welcome you to this **Presidential Development Partners Committee meeting.**

 - **DEPAC must align resources, resolve constraints and accelerate results for the people of Sierra Leone.**

- Our **Medium-Term National Development Plan 2024–2030** and its **Big Five Game Changers** provide a clear roadmap. Our priority now is disciplined implementation.
- **Progress is evident, but delivery remains uneven.** Financing gaps, fragmented interventions and weak coordination continue to limit our collective impact.
- Ladies and Gentlemen, today, **I want us to focus on five priorities:**
 1. **Data, Delivery and the Census;**
 2. **Political Stability, Reconciliation, and Constitutional and Electoral Reform**
 3. **Youth, Agriculture and Human Capital;**
 4. **Macroeconomic Stability, Energy and Private-Sector Growth; and**
 5. **Development Financing, Coordination and Accountability.**

- We must leave this meeting with clear decisions, responsible institutions and firm timelines.

2) RENEWED LEADERSHIP AND DELIVERY

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- I recently made changes to the leadership of Government to strengthen performance, accountability and delivery.
- I welcome the new Minister of Finance, **Mr Karefa Kargbo**, and the new Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, **Mr Mohamed Rahman Swarray**.
- I also acknowledge the service of their predecessors.

- The **Ministry of Finance** must safeguard macroeconomic stability, strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and ensure the effective use of public and development resources.
- The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation** must deepen our partnerships and ensure that our development diplomacy advances national priorities.
- I expect both Ministers, working closely with the **Minister of Planning and Economic Development**, to strengthen coordination and follow-through with our partners.
- **There must be continuity in our commitments, but renewed urgency in delivery.**

3) DATA, DELIVERY AND THE CENSUS

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- We cannot manage what we do not measure or transform what we do not track.
- The **National Development Plan Tracker** must become Government's central instrument for monitoring results, identifying bottlenecks and enforcing accountability.
- Every **Ministry, Department and Agency must use the Tracker.**
- I ask our partners to align their reporting with it so that we have one credible picture of national performance.

- Reliable statistics are equally essential. **The Population and Housing Census, the Demographic and Health Survey, and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey** will guide planning, resource allocation and service delivery.
- Census Night remains fixed for **1 December 2026**.
- The Census is estimated at **US\$37 million**. Government has committed **US\$24 million**, of which approximately **US\$15 million** has been disbursed.
- Partners have committed approximately **US\$1.5 million**, leaving an estimated financing gap of **US\$11.5 million**, alongside the outstanding balance of the Government's commitment.
- The Government must fulfil its obligation, and I call on our partners to help close the remaining gap.

- The decision required today is an urgent financing and disbursement plan that protects the timetable and credibility of the Census.

4) POLITICAL STABILITY, RECONCILIATION, AND CONSTITUTIONAL AND ELECTORAL REFORM

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- Peace, national cohesion and public confidence are essential to investment, development and democratic stability.
- The return of former **President Ernest Bai Koroma** is an important moment in our national journey and an opportunity to deepen reconciliation and reduce political tensions.
- **Government remains committed to peace, constitutionalism, due process and national unity.**

- I call on all political leaders and citizens to reject inflammatory rhetoric, regional division, political intolerance and violence.
- Credible constitutional and electoral reforms must support reconciliation. **The review of the 1991 Constitution must strengthen democratic institutions, protect fundamental rights and reflect the aspirations of the people of Sierra Leone.**
- This is neither a partisan exercise nor one designed to advance any individual political interest.
- It must remain transparent, inclusive and nationally owned, with meaningful participation by political parties, civil society, traditional and religious leaders, women, young people and persons with disabilities.

- The process should build on the work of previous Constitutional Review Committees, the Government White Papers, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations, the Agreement for National Unity and the relevant Tripartite Committee recommendations.
- Constitutional and electoral reforms must proceed in a coordinated and timely manner.
- Priority must be given to stronger electoral institutions, credible voter registration, transparent results management, effective dispute resolution and clarity on the electoral system well ahead of the 2028 elections.

- I direct the relevant institutions to produce a consolidated implementation roadmap setting out completed actions, outstanding reforms, responsible institutions, deadlines and financing requirements.
- I call on our development partners to provide coordinated technical and financial support while respecting Sierra Leone's ownership of the process.

5) PEACE, YOUTH AND HUMAN CAPITAL

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- Sierra Leone has moved beyond post-conflict recovery, but we must never take peace for granted.
- We must prevent crises by addressing youth exclusion, land disputes, inequality, harmful drugs and competition over natural resources.

- I direct the relevant institutions to work with the United Nations on a focused **Peacebuilding Fund proposal** that strengthens early warning, community prevention and local peace structures.
- **Our youthful population and agricultural potential are major national assets.** But agriculture is not creating productive jobs at the scale required.
- **The missing link is value addition. We must connect skills, finance, production, processing, markets and employment.**
- Government and partner programmes must align **Feed Salone** with the **Youth Employment Scheme** and help young Sierra Leoneans move from subsistence farming into commercial agriculture, agro-processing and agribusiness.

- Success must be measured not only by expenditure, but by sustainable jobs and enterprises created, especially for young people, women and persons with disabilities.
- We must also **confront harmful drugs and substance abuse**.
- Our response must combine prevention, law enforcement, mental-health care, treatment, rehabilitation, reintegration, skills and employment support.
- Protecting our young people is fundamental to Sierra Leone's development and stability.

6) MACROECONOMIC STABILITY, ENERGY AND PRIVATE-SECTOR GROWTH

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- Development cannot be sustained without macroeconomic stability.
- Government will maintain fiscal discipline, strengthen domestic revenue, improve debt management and protect priority expenditure on food security, health, education and social protection.
- In a constrained fiscal environment, we must direct resources towards interventions with the greatest national impact.
- **Public resources and development assistance alone cannot finance our transformation.**

- We must use them strategically to unlock responsible private capital, strengthen local enterprise and create jobs.
- This requires predictable policies, improved access to finance, blended-finance instruments, investment guarantees, bankable public-private partnerships and stronger support for SMEs and women-led businesses.
- **Energy remains a binding constraint.** We need coordinated investment in generation, transmission, distribution and renewable energy to power farms, processing centres, businesses and communities.
- All major investments must also strengthen climate resilience, disaster preparedness, sustainable natural-resource management and access to climate finance.

7) **DEVELOPMENT FINANCING, COORDINATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

- The international financing environment is becoming more constrained and less predictable. Our partnership must evolve.
- We must move from fragmented projects towards a financing model that combines domestic revenue, concessional resources, climate finance and responsible private capital.
- Government will strengthen expenditure discipline, counterpart financing, transparency and interministerial coordination.
- We ask our partners to align support with the **National Development Plan**, improve predictability, reduce duplication, build local capacity and use national systems wherever possible.

- **Government must lead; partners must align; and both must be accountable for results.**
- I direct the Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, and Planning and Economic Development to present, within thirty days, a joint framework for development-partner coordination, financing predictability and accountability.

8) DECISIONS REQUIRED TODAY

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

By the conclusion of this meeting, I expect agreement on:

1. An urgent financing and disbursement plan for the Census, alongside full adoption of the **National Development Plan Tracker** and alignment with partner reporting;

- 2. A time-bound and nationally owned roadmap for constitutional and electoral reform, including implementation of the relevant Tripartite Committee recommendations, broad public consultation and coordinated partner support;**
3. Practical measures to connect agricultural investment and value addition with skills, enterprise and sustainable employment for young people;
4. A coordinated response to harmful drugs and substance abuse, including prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration;
5. Increased investment in reliable energy, climate resilience and private-sector growth; and
6. Stronger arrangements for development financing, coordination and mutual accountability.

- Every agreed action must have **a responsible institution, a clear deadline and a measurable result.**
- Progress will be monitored through the **National Development Plan Tracker** and reviewed at the next **DEPAC meeting.**

9) CLOSING REMARKS

DISTINGUISHED PARTNERS,

- **Our relationship must remain grounded in trust, national ownership, mutual accountability and measurable results.**
- Government is accountable for the prudent use of resources and the delivery of results.
- Our partners must align their support with our priorities, institutions and systems.

- Sierra Leone does not need more fragmented activity. **We need aligned investment, disciplined implementation and visible impact.**
- Let us leave this meeting with fewer promises, clearer responsibilities and stronger action for our people.
- **I thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to Sierra Leone.**
- Let us proceed with candour, urgency and a relentless focus on results.

THANK YOU.