



SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT
DR. ERNEST BAI KOROMA *G.C.R.S.L.***

*President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the
Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces*

**On the Occasion of the State Opening of the Third
Session of the Fourth Parliament of the Second Republic
of Sierra Leone**

**In the Chamber of Parliament Building
Tower Hill, Freetown**

On Friday, 5th December, 2014 at 10:00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER,
MR. VICE PRESIDENT,
MY LADY THE CHIEF JUSTICE,
MINISTERS OF GOVERNMENT,
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,
EXCELLENCIES,
MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR OF FREETOWN,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This time last year, we did not have an Ebola outbreak; and no one in the whole world thought a deadly virus like this would strike our sub region and cause so much tragedy, disrupt so many plans, and put at grave risk the very survival of our nation. This time last year, Sierra Leone won high praise and acclamation around the world as a country transforming itself into a model of post war recovery, a country registering sterling economic growth, a country improving its scores on most indices of governance, peace, investor confidence and democracy. This time last year, thousands of our compatriots from the diaspora were trooping to this nation of their birth, most of them confident that the country was opening up to its great potentials. There were many challenges, but the country was moving on with a zeal that never tires to assert the better aspirations of our people.

2. There were many challenges in the health sector, but the free health care initiative was getting more people into hospitals, and infant and maternal mortality rates were decreasing; there were many challenges with our infrastructure, but roads were being built everywhere; there were many challenges with our energy sector, but electricity generation and distribution were rapidly improving; there were challenges with the education sector, but more people were at school than at any other time, more people were passing public exams, more girls were in school and more resources had been given to universities than at any time in our history. As with all countries, we had our law and order challenges, but the country was more at peace than at any time in the last decades, and our soldiers and police officers were models of peace keeping in Africa. And then Ebola struck.

3. It came to us from a brotherly country that stood firmly with us during our civil war. Ebola is a disease that is new to West Africa, and it is new to us. We sought advice from our international friends believing that they knew more about the disease than us. But Ebola in West Africa presented challenges that no one foresaw. Because of ignorance, fear and denial, our actions and that of our international friends could not stem the spread of the disease.

4. Many doctors and nurses fought valiantly; but the virus created lots of panic amongst our people. It was very difficult for so many to understand why they must not care for sick relatives as they were used to doing and why they could not bury their dead. It was difficult to understand why relatives of the Ebola-infected living in the same household must be quarantined; why men and women in white suits should come for the sick and take them away to treatment centres.

5. Rumors of ill intent spread; people hid their sick; others fled to relatives living in other places, taking the virus with them. Since the start of the outbreak, over 6000 Sierra Leoneans have been infected. Thousands have died of the virus in the sub-region. May I ask that we rise up for a minute of silent prayer for doctors, nurses and all our compatriots who have fallen victim of this dreaded virus. May their souls rest in peace!

6. Ebola is hitting us very hard because we are a very close-knit society. We are in very close proximity to each other, we can reach each other's towns and villages in record time; our relatives are everywhere seeking jobs, businesses and other opportunities. That is why a tragedy anywhere in Sierra Leone is a tragedy everywhere in this country. The increasing number of good roads is increasing our daily contacts with each other. Ebola is not a disease of any one district, or region, or country. It is a disease of the world. Globalization, increasing urbanization, faster transportation and denser networks of people moving between rural and urban areas and across borders is fuel for more rapid spread of formerly isolated viral diseases.

7. We note that many countries reacted to the Ebola outbreak in our sub region with a flurry of fear and panic that led to travel restrictions to and from Sierra Leone and our region. But panic is a recipe for bad policies; no country should treat people from affected countries like viruses. We are humans, we are Africans, we are Sierra Leoneans.

8. And because we are humans, because we are Sierra Leoneans, because our will to live is as strong as people everywhere on earth, we will defeat this virus. The fight-back is on. Thousands, including doctors, nurses, lab technicians, contact tracers and other health workers are standing up to fight the virus. They are our greatest patriots. Like loyal soldiers during the war, they put themselves in harm's way to save our lives. It has been a very difficult battle. But our doctors and nurses have ensured that over 1100 of those infected have been healed. Over 80% of the personnel on the ground fighting the disease are Sierra Leoneans. Sierra Leonean doctors and nurses provide most of the frontline services at treatment and holding centres; Sierra Leoneans are the contact tracers, and they constitute the surveillance and burial teams. The largest treatment centre in the country with 120 beds at Hastings, opened in September, is run by young Sierra Leonean doctors and nurses and they have since ensured the survival of over 350 persons infected with the virus. We salute the doctors, nurses, health workers and others all over Sierra Leone presently working to contain this virus.

9. The fight-back is on, and international support is increasing our capacity to defeat the virus. The United Nations held a special session on Ebola and established in record time the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). The World Bank and IMF have approved resources to fight the disease. The British are sending nearly a thousand personnel here and are building several treatment centres with laboratory capacity. The Cubans have provided health workers. The Chinese have provided medical equipment, a lab, and health workers. The WHO and the American CDC are providing invaluable support, and we have had support from the EU, South Africa, Nigeria, Ireland, ECOWAS, Japan, Holland, South Korea and many other countries.

10. That countries and organizations have made commitments amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars is great, and it is worthy to note that the number of those that have disbursed or delivered on their commitments is increasing. But a lot of the commitments made have not been disbursed; they are not yet facts on the ground, and it is only when they become facts on the ground that they could be utilized in the fight against Ebola.

11. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, there are still numerous challenges, but the fight-back is on. In October, we restructured our response, and placed it under a single command and control, the National Ebola Response Center (NERC) headed by the Minister of Defence on special assignment as Chief Executive Officer. The Ebola Virus Disease is war against us, and we must fight

it with tenacity, resolve and discipline. Our objective now is to break the chain of transmission of the disease and stop its spread. The way to do this is to ensure safe burials; remove the infected from communities into holding and treatment centres; and hasten Ebola tests.

12. With support from our partners, including the British, the Chinese, the Americans, MSF, Red Cross, IMC, Emergency and others, we currently have seven treatment centres. But the total bed capacity in all these treatment centres is smaller than the minimum 1500-bed capacity needed in the country to stay ahead of the virus. Additional treatment centres are being built in Bombali, Port Loko, Moyamba, Tonkolili and Freetown, but even these would not get us to the estimated number of beds needed. Infection patterns are geographically shifting. Hotspots at the initial outbreak of the disease are registering very low infection rates, while other areas have seen spikes.

13. Treatment centres need personnel, and the country is in dire need of these personnel, for without them, treatment centres, are non-operational. We are acting on getting more personnel to the country, and more support in training for health workers. Ending the outbreak would require more doctors, nurses, infection control specialists, hygienists, epidemiologists, nutritionists, and counselors. We are heartened by pledges of African countries to send in hundreds of health workers, and the African Union's coordination of this effort; we also welcome the pledge of 30 million dollars by African Businesses to facilitate the deployment of these health workers to the sub region. But speed is of the essence if we are to get quickly ahead of the virus.

14. Mr. Speaker, the fight-back is on. We have developed a post Ebola Recovery Plan. This may be modified as we move along, but we will stop this outbreak and recover from it unto greater strength, wisdom, and action. The Ebola outbreak has created great difficulties for the achievement of goals we set out in our Agenda for Prosperity. But this country will overcome these difficulties; we will defeat Ebola and ensure recovery. Permit me now Mr. Speaker to address the specifics of action, progress and challenges across the various pillars of our Agenda for Prosperity.

PILLAR ONE: ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

The Economy

MR. SPEAKER,

15. Before Ebola struck, Sierra Leone's economy followed a strong growth path, accelerating from a double-digit growth rate of 15.2 percent in 2012 to 20 percent in 2013. The economy was projected to grow by 11.3 percent in 2014 anchored on increased iron ore and other mining activities; increased agricultural production; continuing construction activities; expansion in the services sector; and recovery in tourism. With strong supervision by the Bank of Sierra Leone, the banking sector remained safe, sound and stable.

16. Before the outbreak, revenue collection by the National Revenue Authority was growing. Revenue collection has grown considerably from Le536.9 billion in 2007 to Le2.28 trillion in 2013. This impressive revenue growth has guaranteed a commensurate increased contribution of domestic revenue to government expenditure over the years. In 2013 alone, the domestic revenue collection to total government expenditure reached 72 percent. This performance ensured that the government ended the year 2013 on a sound fiscal balance. But with the lull in economic activities induced by the Ebola outbreak, domestic revenue is expected to drop. The shortfall in domestic revenue combined with the increase in expenditures is already resulting in huge financing gaps for government. Businesses are also experiencing reduced incomes.

17. The Ebola Outbreak is disrupting agricultural, mining, manufacturing, tourism, construction, and air transportation activities, thereby decreasing employment levels. The economy is now projected to grow by 4.0 percent this year instead of 11.3 percent. The outbreak poses a significant threat to economic growth and macroeconomic stability, and is likely to reverse the gains made in human development and poverty reduction in recent years. Inflationary pressures started to build up in the second quarter of 2014 following a significant slowdown in 2013 and the first quarter of 2014. The outbreak is disrupting the growth of the export sector and putting tremendous pressure on the exchange rate of the Leone to major international currencies.

18. But we are fighting back to limit the disruptions and get the country back on track. The Bank of Sierra Leone intervened in the Foreign Exchange Market to provide foreign exchange for the importation of essential commodities to mitigate

the hardship caused by Ebola, by increasing the offer amount in its weekly foreign exchange auction from US\$0.5m to US\$3.0m in addition to conducting special auctions. The NRA has together with the Ministry of Finance developed a Finance Bill for 2015 and a Revenue Administration Bill with the aim of improving efficiency, simplicity, consistency and transparency of the tax system to the benefit of taxpayers. The NRA has also commenced the Short-Term Revenue Improvement Project (STRIP) to raise revenue to support heightened Ebola expenditure and other fiscal priorities.

Agriculture

MR. SPEAKER,

19. Before the outbreak of Ebola, we had challenges in the agricultural sector. But our actions in the sector have resulted in increases in farmer field schools, farmer based organizations, and agricultural business centres. Plant health clinics have been established, and thousands of hectares of tree crops and inland valley swamps rehabilitated, in addition to the establishment of rural and community banks and financial services associations. We have been facilitating more private sector investments in the sector, and to strengthen the interface between agriculture and local governance, we are constructing offices for all councillors and their Ward Development Committees. We are also acting on the finalization, resource mobilization and launching of the medium to long-term successor programme to the Smallholder Commercialization Programme.

20. The Ebola outbreak is halting implementation of many activities in the sector. Farmers constitute over 20% of those infected by the virus. Also, the disease has mostly affected the 21-59 age bracket that are most active in communities, resulting in loss of farm labour. Fear and panic among farmers led many to abandon their farms. The onset of the Ebola outbreak coincided with the land preparation and planting season in Kenema and Kailahun; the main harvesting period of rice in the Northern Province; and the harvesting season of cocoa in the Eastern Province.

21. But we are now commencing actions to limit the disruptions and get the sector ready for a rapid post Ebola recovery. With support from IFAD and FAO, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security has mobilized the provision of preventive care items in nearly six hundred agricultural facilities such as the ABCs, the banks and the offices of the Ministry countrywide. Out of the USD30m committed by the FAO to the three Ebola-affected countries, Sierra Leone will get USD13m.

Marine Resources

MR. SPEAKER,

22. In the fisheries sector, we have completed the process for a Public Private Partnership Investment for four fish receiving centres including jetties at Goderich, Tombo, Shenge and Bonthe for the award of a management contract based on Special Purpose Vehicles (SPVs). Other strategic developments in the sector include the finalization of the following; review of Fisheries Legislation and Policy; a Five Year Strategic Plan for Fisheries Development and Fisheries Management; and fishery stock assessment to evaluate the status of fish stocks to ensure sustainability. Realizing the pressure on the marine fish stocks, we have embarked on robust steps to develop aquaculture and increase fish production in the hinterland.

Trade

MR. SPEAKER,

23. In relation to promotion of trade and industry, we have formulated a Trade Policy and National Trade Strategy, a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) policy, a National Industrial Policy, which has been approved by Cabinet, a Local Content Policy and a draft Local Content Law that will be presented to this Honourable House. A Local Content Unit has been established to oversee the implementation of the policy and the Law when enacted. We have also formulated a Competition Policy and Bill as well as a Consumer Protection Policy and Bill.

24. Sierra Leone continues to make progress in Doing Business rankings. We have continued to organize forums to engage and attract investors. We are building the capacity of the Sierra Leone Standards Bureau, including construction of microbiology and food chemical labs.

PILLAR TWO: MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES

Minerals

MR. SPEAKER,

25. Our actions in the minerals sector have been yielding enormous economic growth for the country, ensuring thousands of jobs and increasing revenues for government, households and private companies. Mining and related activities account for 23% of GDP in 2013 and have been the major drivers of the country's

record-setting economic growth. Whilst other mining sub-sectors including diamond, rutile and bauxite account for 3.4% of GDP, the iron ore sector, which began production in late 2011 accounts for 16% of GDP. Data for the first half of 2014 showed that Sierra Rutile and African Minerals surpassed their production targets for that period. Revised production targets for the whole year indicate that rutile and diamond production targets will fall by 4.8% and 10.4% respectively. However, the decline in international commodity prices of particularly iron ore is significantly affecting projected revenue collection.

26. World market prices of iron ore fell significantly in the first half of the year and there is no indication that these prices will be restored in the near future. In fact, with the current outlook, we are expecting a further dip in prices of this mineral. This has further been made worse by falling shares of iron ore companies in the stock market. Based on estimates from Government and the IMF, the combined effect of the Ebola outbreak and fall in world market prices of iron ore is a projected loss of Le390 billion and Le932 billion for 2014 and 2015 respectively.

27. We have put measures in place to ensure that the impact of the Ebola epidemic on the minerals sector is minimized. We are acting to ensure that challenges relating to change of ownership or management do not lead to loss of the thousands of jobs and billions of leones for local businesses involved in the sector.

28. With support from the African Development Bank, GiZ and UNDP, we have committed ourselves unto the Extractive Sector Benchmarking process of the Natural Resource Charter. We are also pleased to announce that through extensive consultations with key stakeholders in the mining sector, a Chamber of Mines has been established. The facilitation of the Chamber of Mines is an effort to ensure effective and efficient collaboration and co-ordination of the industry, ensure strict compliance by mining companies with the terms of their agreement, promote responsible and sustainable mining practices, and engender responsible corporate citizenship. We are also supporting closer links with the Sierra Leone Institution of Engineers on promoting local content and bringing greater engineering professionalism to the mineral sector.

PILLAR THREE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Health

MR. SPEAKER,

29. The biggest health crisis since the founding of our nation is upon us. The Ebola outbreak not only infects our people with the Ebola virus, it also leads to many other illnesses being untreated. This is why it has been necessary not only to fight Ebola, but also to ensure that we contain the spread of other diseases. As earlier mentioned, last month I created the NERC not only to ensure greater efficiency in our Ebola Response, but also to get the Ministry of Health to focus on non-Ebola diseases and concentrate on the implementation of ongoing interventions in the health sector as stated in the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (2010-2015) and articulated in the Agenda for Prosperity. To actualize this vision, the Ministry has adopted the Primary Health Care Approach that focuses on the provision of a Basic Package of Essential Health Services and continues to implement the Free Health Care Initiative.

Although interrupted by the epidemic, our actions in the health sector have resulted in the following:-

- The Demographic Health Survey of 2013 shows that substantial gains were made in the implementation of the Free Health Care Initiative. We recorded improvements in the reproductive health of women. Nine in ten pregnant women received antenatal care (ANC) from a skilled provider and ANC coverage was high in all districts. Health facility births have almost doubled since 2008 with six in ten births being assisted by a **skilled provider**.
- To reduce maternal mortality, we implemented the National Strategy for the Reduction of Teenage Pregnancy. One hundred public and private health facilities were strengthened to provide adolescent and youth-friendly services;
- Preparations for the launching of the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Scheme (SLeSHIS) in 2015, beginning with a pilot in two districts are at an advanced stage;

- We completed the rehabilitation of the Makeni School of Health Sciences to address the huge middle level manpower gap in Clinical medicine;
- We are training 30 Medical Doctors as Specialists in the sub-region and for the first time, in-country biomedical technician training up to a National Diploma level was completed for twenty (20) technicians;
- We established the National Pharmaceutical Procurement Unit (NPPU) an autonomous institution that can receive and manage its own funds. The NPPU Board and Board Chairman were appointed and the responsibilities of the Central Medical Stores and UNICEF transferred to NPPU.

Education

MR. SPEAKER,

30. We have ensured the following actions in the Education Sector since the last State Opening of Parliament:

31. In the 2013/14 school year, an estimated 7,000 more students were enrolled than 2012/13. Limkokwing University of Creative Technology is ready to commence operation and has issued acceptance letters to over 2,000 students. The Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology in the Northern Region has been established through an Act of Parliament.

32. More teachers are now on the payroll – a total of 2,500 new teachers were put on the payroll between December 2013 and October 2014. More students are entering and passing external examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) – 93,767 candidates sat the NPSE and 71,077 passed in 2013 whilst in 2014, 100,508 sat and 76,733 passed. In the 2014 WASSCE, for the first time in many years, a candidate from Sierra Leone obtained 8 'As' (8 Distinctions). High performing candidates in the 2014 WASSCE were more in number than in 2012 when school candidates last sat the examination.

33. We have commenced a US\$23.4 million project on Revitalising Education Development in Sierra Leone (REDi_SL) with support from the Global Partnership for Education and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID).

34. The outbreak of Ebola is reversing many of these gains. Schools are closed; the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) has been postponed; lots of teachers and students have died from the disease; re-orienting the minds of many school students adversely affected by the Ebola epidemic is going to prove a major challenge.

35. But we are acting to contain the disruptions and put our interventions back on track. An Emergency Education Radio and TV programme has commenced to provide learning opportunities for school students as well as Ebola and psychosocial messages during the period of the Ebola epidemic.

36. We are implementing The Education Sector Plan (ESP) 2014 – 2018 – ‘Learning to Succeed’. The plan has three broad goals: improve access, equity and completion of education at all levels in all areas; improve quality and relevance of education; and strengthen education service delivery. In order to achieve these goals the Ministry is embarking on activities that include: making educational institutions safe to use by students after the Ebola epidemic period; strengthening guidance and counselling at all levels of education to provide psychosocial support for students; revival of School Broadcasting and establishing web pages, and other multi-media; and distribution of solar power radios with memory cards to remote rural and deprived communities for accessing educational radio broadcasts.

Youths

MR. SPEAKER,

37. Our country is a nation of young people. Youths, defined as those between ages 15 and 35, comprise about a third of the country’s population. Without their participation, their health, and their positive role, our nation is doomed; there would be no present and no future. Without the active participation of youths, we cannot overcome any of the challenges facing this country; without youths we cannot overcome difficulties posed by the Ebola outbreak and without them we cannot prevail over non-Ebola related obstacles. Youths are at the fore of our fight against the virus. The overwhelming majority of health workers, from nurses to contact tracers, burial teams, communication teams and volunteers are youths. This nation owes its very survival to youths. Youths are more resilient than any other group; the majority of those who survive Ebola are youths; we must build on this resilience of our youths to overcome the challenges we now face as a nation.

38. Youths must be at the fore of actions for containing the impact of Ebola on our productive sectors and social services, and we are acting to ensure this. In the area of sanitation, I must applaud the young people of this nation who are actively engaged in the Youth Employment Scheme and getting our district headquarter towns and cities cleaned and environmentally friendly. In Agriculture, I must salute the young people who are contributing immensely to the development of the National Youth Farm at Masalia near Masiaka. In positive anticipation that Ebola will soon be over and the country is restored to safe environment and peace, in 2015, my Government will ensure that district and Chiefdom Youth Farms are established. My Government has identified and demarcated a thousand acres of land donated by the people of Sengbeh Chiefdom in Koinadugu District for the establishment of the National Youth Village which will serve as a centre of excellence for skills training of young people at all levels. With support from the Chinese, construction will start as soon as the Ebola outbreak is contained.

39. We have developed frameworks for greater action with youths. This includes the National Youth Programme as the blueprint for youth development that has been approved by both Cabinet and Parliament; and the National Youth Policy of 2014 that will be laid before this Honourable House.

40. My government has developed the framework for the establishment of a National Youth Service for young people to gain experience in marketable jobs and hence provide an effective means of employability. We are also establishing a Special Youth Fund. We are acting on the establishment of Youth Centres in every District.

41. We have paid tuition fees for thousands of young people in Universities and Colleges to acquire relevant skills training that will enhance their chances of employment. We are providing Grant-in-Aid for young people in the newly established Limkokwing University of Creative Technology. With our Graduate Internship Programme, the National Youth Commission, in collaboration with UNDP, has commenced the placement of graduates as interns in workplaces to get them to gain relevant job experience. My government is also working in concert with the World Bank to provide vocational and technical training for thousands of young people with particular attention to female and disabled youths. The same project ensures thousands of jobs nationwide in the "Cash for Work" programme implemented by NaCSA.

Sports

MR. SPEAKER,

42. We are stepping up efforts for the establishment of sports infrastructure in communities across the country. The Bo Sports Stadium was commissioned on 26th April, 2014 with a capacity of 4,000 spectators. Government is seeking the extension of the capacity of the stadium to 20,000 with support from the Government of the People's Republic of China.

43. Sierra Leone made substantial impact in sports especially in athletics, volleyball and cycling by winning laurels for Sierra Leone in ECOWAS Games and international tournaments. Whilst the Ebola outbreak is having negative effects on our rankings, Sierra Leone attained its highest ranking ever in football from 176th to 50th in FIFA world football ranking and from 45th to 7th position in CAF African football ranking. In athletics, Sierra Leone came 3rd in the ECOWAS Junior Championships in the Ivory Coast in April. Our most remarkable performance has been in volleyball where Sierra Leone was named the best junior volleyball team in Africa for 2014 at the under-17, under-19, under-21 and under-23 levels. On account of this, the Sierra Leone Volleyball Association is recognized as the model volleyball association for Africa.

Water Resources

MR. SPEAKER,

44. In line with the Agenda for Prosperity, the Water Sector is currently undergoing the following reforms:-

- Establishment of the Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission - a multi-sector regulator for electricity and water;
- Establishing the National Water Resources Management Agency - a resource regulator, whose bill will now be tabled in this Honourable House for enactment;

45. The Ministry is also vigorously seeking to address the challenges of Freetown Water Supply and is currently engaging its partners, including the Chinese Government and the private sector. A detailed feasibility study has been done on the River Rokel which looks at supplying water from that source to the New Airport City and the eastern part of Freetown. Plans are also being pursued for the rehabilitation and expansion of the Freetown (Western) Water Supply network.

PILLAR FOUR: INTERNATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

Infrastructure

MR. SPEAKER,

46. Transforming the infrastructure of this country has been the bedrock of my government's plans. Before the outbreak, work was progressing on roads in every region in the country. The outbreak of the disease halted the continuation of these actions. But we are recommencing work on them. These projects include upgrading of Mange – Mambolo – Rokupr roads Project-35km; Panlap – Kamakwie – Madina - Oula rehabilitation project-148km; rehabilitation of Makeni – Kabala road, Bandajuma-Pujehun road; rehabilitation of roads in Port Loko, Lunsar, Kambia, Moyamba, Mattru Jong, Pujehun, Koidu, Kabala and roads in Freetown. With the containment of the outbreak, we will be proposing the construction of Tagrin-Lungi-Konakridee Project, roads within the Waterloo township, rehabilitation of Mile 88 – Yonibana – Mile 91; extension of Wellington – Masiaka Highway into a four lane and tolled road-62km; and the introduction of a toll system on the Regent– Kossoh Town Highway.

47. During the period 2013-2014, we also commenced reconstruction and rehabilitation work on State House, Parliament, State Lodge, Bo Government Lodge, the VP's office, the former Foreign Affairs building which will now house the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Immigration Department, the Tourism Ministry, Youyi Building and the construction of a Government Lodge at Kabala.

48. But even as we build we must strive to maintain them, else all would be in vain. It is in this light that we have been capacitating the National Assets and Government Property Commission to develop an updated register of government assets, from vehicles, to lands, and other infrastructure as a viable step towards ensuring their proper use and maintenance.

ENERGY

MR. SPEAKER,

49. Our vision in the energy sector is to increase generation to 1000 megawatts by 2017. Achieving this requires attracting the private sector and making the investment financially sustainable; getting an energy mix that will result in tariffs that consumers can afford; rehabilitation works to improve quality of service for existing customers; extending access through investments in transmission and distribution and the reorganization of the sector to support growth.

50. With completion of the power plants at Bankasoka, Charlotte, Kono, Addax and provincial headquarter towns, we will increase electricity to 173 megawatts in 2015 from the current 100 megawatts. Our reforms and unbundling of the sector are attracting investors and allowing us to engage Independent Power Providers for partnerships to increase power generation to 199 MW in 2016 and to 1080 megawatts in 2018. This will be done through power purchase agreements and other models with Copperbelt Energy Corporation, Betmal, Moyamba Hydro, Bumbuna Phase Two, the West Africa Power Pool, Solar and other thermal plants.

51. We are also expanding transmission of electricity to more households, offices and businesses throughout the country. Activities towards this goal include emergency grid works in the Western Area, rehabilitation of transmission and distribution in the Kingtom, Wilberforce, Blackhall Road and Wellington communities and solar roll-outs to villages in the provinces. We have completed the electrification of Bumbuna Town, and moving on with the connectivity between Addax Bio-Energy site and the Bumbuna–Freetown supply.

52. We are moving forward with the unbundling of the electricity sector. We have established the Electricity Transmission and Generation Company, the Electricity Distribution and Supply Authority, and the Electricity and Water Regulatory Commission. We have appointed Boards of Directors for these bodies and splitting of assets and personnel is ongoing.

53. Whilst the Ebola outbreak has slowed down aspects of our work on renewable energy projects, the construction of the Charlotte and Bankasoka Hydro Power Plants are 70% completed, and construction of the hydro power plant at Makali is in progress. The procurement of 50,000 solar street lights across the country has commenced, and activities for the installation of a 6MW solar power park at Newton are underway.

Information and Communications

MR. SPEAKER,

54. My Government is presently building a national fibre optic backbone connecting major cities and towns across the country, and our sister countries of Guinea and Liberia. We are ensuring the rejuvenation of the state-owned Telecom operator, Sierratel; it is now a leader in mobile internet services in the country. We have enacted the Freedom of Information (FOI) Law and set up an FOI

Commission. The appointment of the Commissioners has received the concurrence of this House; and the Commission is commencing work. We have drafted a new Communications Bill to effectively address current challenges. The Bill when enacted by this Honourable House will liberalize the ICT/Telecom sector to ensure greater consumer rights, fairness and healthy competition for existing and potential market players. To facilitate more professional media engagements, we have developed a new Independent Media Commission Bill. And to enhance effective delivery of the public service, all MDAs will be fully connected to the national broadband service, thus integrating electronic governance (e-governance) in the management and operations of the state.

Transport

MR. SPEAKER,

55. Our nation has been badly affected by flight bans to and from our country as a result of Ebola. But we are working to reverse this. Our efforts at establishing stricter health checks at our airport and our continuous engagements with airlines have ensured that Air Maroc and Brussels Airlines continue to operate flights to the country. We have also ensured the resumption of flights by a regional airline, Air Ivoire. We are also ensuring 100 new buses will arrive in the country during the first half of 2015 to ease internal transportation difficulties. We are procuring two new ferries before the end of 2015.

56. In relation to the new Airport at Mamamah, we are working on relocating affected communities, and the Chinese construction team are working on mobilization and bringing in equipment.

PILLAR FIVE: LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

57. In its bid to promote the Decent Work Country Programme, we have developed the National Employment Policy Implementation Plan, and a new minimum wage of Le500, 000 has been negotiated with the private sector to replace the current minimum wage of Le21, 000. The new wage comes into effect on 1st January 2015. In order to set up a comprehensive Labour Market Information System (LMIS) the Labour Force Survey has been concluded and the data collected

is being analyzed. In concert with the Local Content Policy, the Work Permit Bureau has recommenced operations to ensure that work that Sierra Leoneans are qualified for, capable and willing to do are not taken away by foreign nationals. In order to properly regulate the employment of Sierra Leoneans abroad, a National Migration Policy has been developed.

PILLAR SIX: SOCIAL PROTECTION

MR. SPEAKER,

58. My Cabinet has approved a National Social Protection Policy and Strategy to provide a comprehensive framework for a coordinated approach to social interventions in Sierra Leone. We have established the Social Protection Secretariat housed within NaCSA, with the key mandate to bring all social protection players together for an efficient, cost-effective and unified system of delivery. In collaboration with the World Bank we have secured US\$ 8 Million for the commencement of cash transfers to 13,000 extremely poor and vulnerable households in four districts (Moyamba, Bombali, Kono and Western Rural) for a period of two years. We have secured a US\$ 51 Million support from the Islamic Development Bank and Government of Sierra Leone, for the implementation of the Growth Poles Project aimed at transforming poor chiefdoms into hubs for economic growth.

59. As part of government's commitment to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) report, physical verification of a residual caseload of 1,618 Severely War Wounded Victims has been completed and government has approved the sum of Le. 6.138 Billion Leones to provide rehabilitation grants to the verified victims.

60. As part of the safety net measure targeting vulnerable households, NaCSA provided short-term employment in Agricultural Labour Intensive Public Works for 1,744 households. Between January and June this year over three thousand (3000) vulnerable aged benefited from the programme's cash transfer implemented in Kholifa Rowalla, Yoni, Konike Barina, Tane, Konike Sanda in the Tonkolili District and Kori, Kaiyamba, Kongbora, Bumpe and Ribbi Chiefdoms in the Moyamba District. We have secured land in Makeni for the establishment of an old people's home in the Northern Province and plans are underway to replicate similar projects in the other regions.

61. Cabinet has approved the Child Welfare Policy as a framework for strengthening child protection systems. The Alternative Care Policy, which seeks to remove children from the streets, has also been developed and approved by Cabinet. With the outbreak of Ebola, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs has been engaged in the registration of children affected by Ebola and providing services for them. In line with this, the Ministry is engaged in the Rehabilitation of the former NaCWAC Child friendly centres located in Makeni, Kailahun and Bo as interim care centres to host Ebola survivors particularly women and children prior to reintegration in their communities.

PILLAR SEVEN: GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM

Law and Justice

MR. SPEAKER,

62. At the heart of Government's development agenda is a justice system that delivers access to justice. With our construction of new court houses we are increasing this access through the new functioning Magistrates' Court at Pademba Road, Ross Road and York in the Western Area; Masiaka, Mile 91 and Moyamba in the Provinces. We have recruited more judges and magistrates, enabling us to staff places like Gbangbatoke, Kambia and Kailahun.

63. The itinerant courts have been revived and made functional throughout the country. Saturday Courts were initiated to deal with Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) offences. This has been very fruitful in dealing with such offences in a very speedy manner. The passing of the Legal Aid Act of 2012 has helped more citizens get access to justice and reduced constant adjournments. The Criminal Procedure Bill is now before this Honourable House and it will help to speed up justice, simplify processes for the prosecution of offences, and provide for alternative sentencing. Local Courts, now supervised by the Judiciary of Sierra Leone have been launched countrywide.

64. To further reduce pressure on the courts, Government will propose a modern Arbitration Law to settle civil and commercial disputes in a more timely and less adversarial manner.

65. The Human Rights Commission is currently disseminating its seventh annual report on the state of human rights in Sierra Leone.

The Fight Against Corruption

MR. SPEAKER,

66. In the Year under review, the Anti Corruption Commission (ACC) successfully completed the coordination of the implementation of the country's 2nd five-year National Anti Corruption Strategy. A total of fifty-eight (58) government ministries, departments and agencies, representing 83% of entities highlighted in the Strategy, were monitored and reported on by the Civil Society Monitoring Group (CSMG). Through MDAs' Integrity Management Committees (IMCs), the mainstreaming of anti-corruption initiatives at both the central and local government level is gradually gaining momentum.

67. In the year under review, the ACC recorded a 100% conviction rate in all matters charged to and adjudicated by the courts.

68. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of Parliament, we know the majority of Sierra Leoneans are dedicated to fighting Ebola, but there are those, from both within and outside our country that seek corrupt capital out of it. Let it be known to all and sundry that we will bring to book and punish these shameless persons.

Audit Service

MR. SPEAKER,

69. I applaud this Honourable House for enacting The Audit Service Act 2014 effectively replacing the 1998 Act.

70. Let me use this opportunity to congratulate our Auditor General on her appointment as chair of the African Organization of English Speaking Supreme Audit Institutions during its last governing board meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in May 2014. This appointment is a first for West Africa and the first for a woman.

71. Because my Government has ensured that the number of professional staff continues to increase, the Audit Service is now better equipped to carry out more credible audits and has increased audit coverage and the quality of the audit reports. From a 75% coverage in 2012, we can now boast of an 81% coverage in 2013. Because Local Councils receive allocations and access revenues more than many government ministries and other agencies, and because their better

functioning is key to overall socio-economic development, the Audit Service is greatly involved in providing auditing services to them. The Service has completed and submitted all nineteen Local Council audited accounts for the financial year ended 31st December 2013.

72. The Audit Service is now fully involved in the audit of all current and upcoming World Bank projects.

Public Enterprise Reform

MR. SPEAKER,

73. We are continuing actions on reforming and privatizing a number of public enterprises. In collaboration with partners, Government has embarked on a privatization scheme that would eventually transform the Sierra Leone Ports Authority (SLPA) to a landlord port. In this regard, the Container Terminal Concession Agreement is under review, the Break Bulk License Agreement has now been laid in this Honourable House and the tender process for a second license has begun.

74. The transformation of Sierratel is in full swing as is evident by the recent launching of the landline infrastructure providing super fast internet speed over fibre, thereby positioning the company as the sole provider of mobile and fixed communication services in the country.

75. In relation to the financial sector, Government is working on the resuscitation of the National Development Bank (NDB), SALPOST Savings Bank and the National Cooperative Bank. Government is recapitalising Rokel Commercial Bank and the Sierra Leone Commercial Bank. The overall objective is to divest government's interest in the banks through a phased process.

The Public Service

MR. SPEAKER,

76. Capacitating the Public Service for delivery of its functions is continuing. These include actions on improving decision-making and implementation mechanisms; strengthening strategic leadership and performance management in the Civil Service, and ensuring the alignment of ministerial strategies and programmes with the Agenda for Prosperity.

77. Throughout the year, the Cabinet Secretariat supported the Human Resource Management Office in rationalizing the civil service through right sizing and recruitment.

78. The Public Service Reform Unit (PSRU) has strengthened its capacity for deeper engagement with the other policy environments in the wider public sector. The unit is coordinating the achievement of the targets in the flagship Pay and Performance Project (P&PP) and providing technical backstopping to MDAs as necessary. In the year under review the PSRU completed a comprehensive institutional assessment of all 19 Local Councils.

79. Continuing reform at the Public Service Commission includes the introduction of a Competency-based Recruitment Process. The PSC has been able to develop best practice standards, including a Citizens Service Charter, a Code of Conduct & Ethics, and a website to modernise and enhance the Commission's interactions with the rest of the world. The PSC has also established Regional Offices in the Provincial headquarter cities of Bo, Kenema and Makeni to ensure the gradual decentralisation of its activities. Work is underway to consolidate public service reforms over the last few years into a Public Service Bill that will be placed before this Honourable House.

Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

MR. SPEAKER,

80. During the period under review, My Government continued to make Sierra Leone an indispensable voice in promoting global understanding and cooperation.

81. Our two new diplomatic missions in the Republic of South Korea and the United Arab Emirates respectively became fully operational in April and September this year. We are re-examining our full diplomatic representation to ensure that Sierra Leone is more strategically positioned in frontier countries including Egypt, Kenya and South Africa.

82. We also remain committed to ensuring the representation of Sierra Leoneans at the highest levels of continental and global governance. We succeeded in getting the re-election of a Sierra Leonean as Chairman of the International Civil Service Association, and we have taken a decision to forward the nominations of Dr. Samura Kamara as President of the African Development Bank and Mr. Joseph Kamara to the AU Advisory Board on Corruption.

83. My Government remains firmly committed to multilateralism and a fairer and equitable global governance system. In this regard, and as Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten (C-10) Heads of State and Government, we held consultative meetings in the Republics of Congo and Kenya in May and November respectively to continue to provide strong leadership for the advancement of the African common position on the reform of the United Nations Security Council.

84. My Government's commitment to scaling up our involvement in the maintenance of international peace and security through our participation in peacekeeping operations and critical global governance initiatives is unequivocal. Prior to the Ebola outbreak, a replacement contingent of trained and properly prepared security personnel for Somalia was already in place and ready to go. My government is standing by to fulfil its peace-keeping obligations when it is called upon to do so.

85. Mr. Speaker, in promoting global security, we have this year ratified the Arms Trade Treaty as well as the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its three related Protocols. In order to enhance our maritime benefits, we have concluded negotiations of the Joint West African Member States Continental Shelf Project on the delineation and extension of the outer limits of our territorial waters beyond the 200 nautical miles, and have laid the Instrument before the United Nations during its 69th Session in September this year.

Security and Defence

MR. SPEAKER,

86. The Office of National Security has developed a host of the relevant policies and practices geared towards enhancing security in the country. The RSLAF is the pride of Sierra Leone, a symbol of our country's dedication to peace, a symbol of its recovery from war, and a sign to all that this country will emerge victorious from the present war against Ebola. The RSLAF is at the fore of this new fight, providing security for health workers and playing major roles in the construction of treatment centres at Kerry Town, Goderich, Hastings, Port Loko, Makeni and Moyamba. RSLAF officers occupy key appointments at the Command and Control centres nationwide. RSLAF Doctors and medical staff are in charge at the largest and most successful Ebola treatment centre in the country at the Police Training School in Hastings. Early this week, the RSLAF opened a 40-bed treatment centre at Wilberforce 34 Hospital.

87. The RSLAF now has troops in five UN missions around the world (UNAMID, UNIFIL, AMISOM, UNISFA and MINUSMA).

To better train and prepare RSLAF personnel for deployment on Peace Support Operations, the Ministry of Defence in collaboration with other stakeholders have erected a standard training facility at Hastings known as the Peace Mission Training Centre (PMTC). This facility can accommodate up to 1000 personnel at a given time.

88. My government is also ensuring more infrastructure for the military. From Wilberforce to Gondoma, we have built more accommodation blocks. The procurement process for the construction of a modern battalion-sized barracks at 11th battalion is progressing.

89. My Government is almost completing a number of infrastructural development projects in the police force, including a new Regional Police Headquarters at Lumley, a Divisional Headquarters at Hill Station and a Garment Factory at Kingtom for the purpose of sewing police uniforms. In the eastern part of Freetown, a new Police Regional Headquarters at Ross Road and a Police Station at Blackhall Road, Kissy are under construction. In order to enhance police presence nationwide, police posts have been constructed in Gbinti, Mateboi, Mano Dasse, Koribondo and Dogolia.

90. The Sierra Leone Police Academy project along the Makeni Magburaka highway is also progressing satisfactorily. Architectural drawings have been completed, and construction will start early in the New Year. The Police will soon embark on a low cost housing project using hydraform technology from South Africa.

91. My Government is aware of concerns raised by some members of the public regarding police conduct. In order to make the police more professional and more accountable in the discharge of their duties we have set up the Independent Police Complaints Board.

92. The Sierra Leone Prisons Service has been transformed into a Correctional Service. This transformation will ensure safer and more human custody and supervision of offenders; and support their rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

93. Civil registration reform is currently underway with the view to establishing an integrated national civil register and the introduction of a national identity card for multiple purpose use by 2016. A National Civil Registration Act will govern a national civil registration system and establish a National Civil Registration Authority. The Authority will have the legal mandate to regulate, direct and implement all aspects of civil registration, including the maintenance of such a national register.

94. The Immigration Department has installed a computerized passenger profiling system for storing data of all passengers travelling into and out of the country for security purposes. This has tremendously enhanced the performance of the security agencies dealing with the new threats to national and international security. This has led to the upgrade of the country's international airport as it is now compliant with ICAO protocols.

PILLAR EIGHT: GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

MR. SPEAKER,

95. Although our current epidemic has slowed down some of our interventions, my Government has ensured that women's empowerment remains a top priority.

96. My Government has continued to promote women in decision-making across the spectrum. Today, for the first time in our history, we have three female Assistant Inspector -Generals in the Police Force and more women have gained promotion across all ranks. Also, in the Civil Service, there has been a huge increase in the attainment of Permanent Secretary and Director positions by women. Whilst I await the passing of the 30% Quota Bill by this Honourable House, my Government will continue to appoint more women to leadership roles in government agencies.

97. We have established the Women and Youth Fund and allocated seed money to it. Government will also launch the African Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) in close collaboration with the US Government. We will ensure that more women benefit from the SME Fund to support their full participation in utilizing the minimum 30% quota in Government funded procurement transactions. In contributing to gender equity and women's empowerment drive, NaCSA recorded an improved conducive business environment for women, through greater access to finance and capacity development. NaCSA provided funds totaling USD\$ 1.5m as a revolving fund meant for improving access to capital for women's groups. In addition, funds have been secured to beef-up the revolving fund and provide increased access to about 720 women's groups.

98. Since the enactment of the Sexual Offences Act 2012, we have seen an increase in reported cases of sexual violence. We will continue to ensure that the law takes its course against those backward men who still think that the only way to be a man is to be violent against women.

99. We are continuing to improve access of girls to education by providing free Junior Secondary School education for girls effective next academic year.

The Post Ebola Recovery Plan

MR. SPEAKER,

100. As you may be aware, the outbreak has warranted a revision of the medium term outlook to reflect current developments and the hope that the disease will be put under control by the end of 2014. Assuming that this assumption holds, we expect the economy to evolve with a projected growth of 2.5 percent in 2015. But a prolonged spread of the Ebola Virus Disease will further disrupt economic activities, undermine domestic revenue collection as well as divert scarce budgetary resources from other productive activities. Our Post Ebola Recovery Plan takes these two scenarios into consideration, and our basket of programmes are aimed at mitigating and dealing with the socio-economic ramifications of the outbreak, ensuring that the country strengthens its capacity to quickly end future outbreaks.

101. These programmes require that we prioritize interventions in eight key areas: reviving the economy, health, agriculture, education, social protection, access to finance, youth and restarting infrastructural projects. In the health sector, we will work on reviewing the national health system; develop a Public Health Master plan; establish a Directorate for Environmental Sanitation and Hygiene that is fully decentralized; promote in-country postgraduate medical education; improve hospital management through redeployment of doctors from mainstream administration to their core functions; create a National Ambulance Service that will be outsourced to a private company; scale up incentives for health workers across the country; increase safety for health workers; expand health insurance coverage; and establish a health insurance scheme for health workers.

102. In the education sector, we are working on measures for the safe re-opening of schools as early as possible; establish and strengthen newer modes of learning using information communication technology; provide health safety kits and disinfectants for schools; increase incentives to encourage children to return to school through payment of tuition fees for girls in government and government-assisted junior secondary schools; and implement a nationwide school feeding programme.

103. We have increased allocation to the agriculture sector, a sector that has been badly hit, and where the majority of our people earn their livelihood. The increased allocation is to re-establish farm activities and extension services, provide farm inputs and credit facilities through our network of community banks and rural finance associations. Strongly linked to revival of livelihoods in the sector, is our establishment of the One Tree One Dollar Social Forestry Project which will provide money for every tree planted by our people.

104. To scale up social protection, we will continue to expand assistance to physically challenged persons and war victims and provide support to the emerging vulnerable group of Ebola survivors.

105. We are also restarting infrastructural projects. Our Emergency Electricity Supply Programme is moving on to provide electricity to 21 unserved communities, including Waterloo, Deep Eye, Devil Hole, Hastings, Leicester Road, Upper Allen Town, Bottlefield, Pamuronkoh, Blackhall Road, Joshua Drive, Upper Savage Square, Upper New England, Lumley, Portee and a host of other communities in the Western Area. We are moving on to complete our electrification projects for Koidu New Sembahun, Port Loko, Pepel, Moyamba, Kailahun, Magburaka and other towns.

106. Youths are the engine of growth, and our post Ebola plan also pivots around utilizing the energy and creativity of youths to put the country back on track to achieving our goals. That is why we are making a National Youth Service Corps functional; and that is why we are establishing a Young Engineers Scheme.

107. We can no longer stand still and allow panic to freeze us out of what we can safely do to move on with our lives and programmes. We know Ebola has allowed many to provide excuses that have little to do with Ebola; but the time for excuses is over, we must get on with the activities that could be safely done at the individual, chiefdom, district, regional and national levels.

108. These interventions require funding and improved fiscal capacities. This is a great challenge as we are presently experiencing a huge fiscal gap as a result of the very outbreak itself. Improving our fiscal space would warrant measures that include increasing our domestic debt ceiling, relief from international debt financing so that we could use the savings to fund our interventions; improving revenue collection; and securing budgetary support from traditional and emerging partners. We have commenced actions on all of these measures.

Conclusion

MR. SPEAKER,

109. Our response capacity is surging and we will soon get ahead of the virus. But whatever we do will count for little if individuals don't stop touching the sick and those who die of the disease. The battle will be ultimately won at the level of our behaviour as individuals and families. We know what we are being asked to do is difficult, but life is bigger than these difficulties; our survival as a nation warrants us to do what we are not used to doing. But we must do it. This is a choice between life and death, and I believe our commitment to life will overcome those behaviours that bring death. I strongly believe in this, and I know every Sierra Leonean will live up to what must be done to save our families, our communities and our nation.

110. We must all overcome our governmental, international and community challenges in an almost perfect-fit to stop Ebola. Even if government and its partners build all the required treatment centres and provide all the logistics, it will still be very difficult to end the outbreak if our people continue to touch the sick and bury the dead without certification and support from the burial teams. This is a fight that requires all to do their part. Government will continue to increase and improve on its capacity to deal with the outbreak, but we are all in this together. It is a fight for every individual in every community; every family in every chiefdom and every district.

111. We will overcome. The Sierra Leonean-run centre at Hastings is getting out more survivors than almost all other centre

s. We salute the brave Sierra Leoneans working in that centre and all over the country to end this outbreak. Without our doctors and nurses and other health workers, this battle cannot be won; without the light of your service we will be groping in the dark. We rely on your knowledge, your compassion and your commitment to win this fight. We salute the survivors of Ebola. You are living symbols of our eventual victory over this deadly disease. Fighting this disease also requires that we hail rather than stigmatize our survivors and health-workers. Those who have survived Ebola require our support and care; we must not let them down. To the international world, and to those who are rushing to stigmatize us, remember that over 99% of us are not infected by Ebola; and we are doing all in our strength and resolve to defeat this virus. Your empathy, rather than stigmatization is the better way to stop this virus from spreading. Stop the blanket ban of flights to and from our region; stop the stigmatization of our people in your countries; stop the panic reactions that are slowing down the deployment of health personnel and equipment in our region. These deployments are what would really stop Ebola from spreading, and not the stigmatization.

112. Fellow Sierra Leoneans, the Ebola outbreak is emphasizing to all that we are more connected to each other than many would admit. No one can be immune from the challenges facing the nation; and this calls for all of us to work together to overcome these challenges.

113. We salute our international friends for standing up with us in this moment of great trial for our nation and all humanity. We salute our parliamentarians who are mobilizing their constituencies to fight this virus; we salute our chiefs who are implementing byelaws to ensure behavioural changes required to fight this evil; we salute those imams and pastors who are promoting scriptures of life

and not practices that lead to death; we salute our security forces, our youths, our women and our children.

114. I believe in Sierra Leone. Like we were hailed earlier this year as a symbol of post war recovery, democratic progress and economic growth, let us be hailed again as an exemplar of post Ebola recovery, stronger health systems, peace, good governance and development. I say this because I have great faith in God and in this country. These are trying moments; we are at war with a killer virus, but we must show forth the good that is in us, we must show forth our devotion, our strength and our might. Fellow Sierra Leoneans, this is the time to raise our hearts unto actions required of us, so that the blessing of healing continues to descend upon us all. No one should stay behind in this fight; let us all ensure that no one is left behind. This is a fight for all of us; and all of us must be involved to ensure victory. We will be victorious, we will be victorious, In the Name of God Almighty, we will be victorious.

115. God bless Sierra Leone.