

## GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

Presidential Address Delivered by HIS EXCELLENCY ALHAJI DR. AHMAD TEJAN KABBAH  
G.C.R.S.L. President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Sierra  
Leone On the Occasion of the State Opening of the  
Second Session of the First Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra Leone In the Chamber of  
Parliament Building Tower Hill, Freetown Friday, 22nd May, 1998 at 10.00 a.m.

MR. SPEAKER,  
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT:

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I feel a sense of joy and satisfaction that I can today speak to the Honourable Members of Parliament and through them to all the people of Sierra Leone, despite the gloom that descended over our country a year ago, when we all experienced a day of infamy in our history. We are now beginning to grapple with the bitter repercussions of the AFRC/RUF Junta interregnum. I know many Sierra Leoneans have been striving to understand why anyone who claimed to wish the people of Sierra Leone well, would have committed such heinous crimes against the people of this country. Even though the Revolutionary United Front, in a moment of euphoria, apologised to the people of Sierra Leone for their crimes against humanity and asked for their forgiveness, as I speak they are recklessly committing similar crimes against defenceless civilians in some villages and towns in the North and north-eastern parts of our country.

2. It is obvious that the junta did not want Sierra Leone to exist as a nation. The RUF and their allies had commenced their atrocities by destroying the sources of our national wealth such as Rutile, Bauxite and Diamond Mines. They also went on to destroy our Secretariat building and the Central Bank, destroyed and ravaged Government buildings and private homes; all calculated to ensure that as a government as a people, Sierra Leoneans should not survive. In the case of the Secretariat building they did not only destroy valuable financial records, irreplaceable historical documents of our first legislature were also lost since the Legislative Council was housed on the ground floor of that building. While they have been on the rampage in the Northern Province, they even recently attempted, though unsuccessfully, to destroy the Bumbuna Hydroelectric Dam; one of our most expensive national assets which is critical for our take-off into the next millennium.

Notwithstanding the intimidation, the wanton and massive destruction of our limited infrastructure, the people of Sierra Leone valiantly and unequivocally stood up and rejected the AFRC and RUF Junta.

## SECURITY ECOMOG OPERATIONS IN SIERRA LEONE

3. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, since the expulsion by ECOMOG of the AFRC/RUF Junta from Freetown in February this year and the restoration of the democratically elected government, ECOMOG has rapidly restored security in most parts of the country. The drive by ECOMOG, assisted by the CDF and some loyal members of the Sierra Leone Military and Police to flush out remnants of the junta is progressing satisfactorily. I can assure you that these drifting elements will soon be completely eliminated if they continue to resist.

4. The swift and decisive action taken by leaders of ECOWAS Member States, under the Chairmanship of General Sani Abacha, to reinstate constitutional order in Sierra Leone will forever be remembered by the people of Sierra Leone.

5. By its professionalism and outstanding performance in the subregion, ECOMOG has demonstrated that it has the potential to become a regional peace-keeping and enforcement organisation at par with any similar force anywhere in the world.

6. I should, at this juncture state that the lion share of the cost of the ECOMOG operation in Sierra Leone, in terms of manpower and logistics has been borne mainly by the Federal Republic of Nigeria assisted by the Republic of Guinea. Recently, other regional States have offered to contribute troops to the ECOMOG Task Force in the country. These troops will soon be deployed in Sierra Leone. The deployment of a United Nations Observer Force has also commenced. Some western countries have promised to assist in the provision of logistics to help ECOMOG to complete its task. Yesterday the United States Government offered about USD4 million to meet the logistical needs of ECOMOG. We are deeply grateful.

## SECURITY AS THE PRIORITY OF GOVERNMENT

7. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, I take the security of this country as my number one priority and I intend to pursue this objective with all necessary vigour. We have had to review the entire security arrangements for the country. A policy paper is under preparation and will be discussed with Parliament and brought to the attention of the public for their inputs, before it is finalised.

## CREATION OF A NEW ARMY

8. In my assessment, Brigadier-General Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe who was recently promoted to this rank in the Nigerian Army, in recognition of his professionalism, competence and high sense of duty, has also demonstrated a deep sense of commitment to the safety of our people and security of the nation. I have therefore requested Brigadier-General Khobe to use his wide experience in helping us to develop guidelines for putting together a new army. And upon request, General Sani Abacha has kindly agreed to make him available to us. I am confident that Brigadier-General Khobe

will bring his experience and expertise to bear on this assignment and create a framework which will ensure that we have a defence system that is manned by competent and disciplined people who see the military as a noble profession and not as a means of achieving their selfish objectives.

### CREATION OF A SUPERIOR INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY

9. I inherited a security system characterised by indiscipline, inefficiency, disloyalty and deception. Because of this, I am determined to put in place a security system that will serve the nation effectively, with honesty and dedication. You may recall that I disclosed soon after the coup d'etat of May 25, 1997, that I was informed by the MI8 that a coup was being planned. The Chief of Defence Staff, at the time, assured me that he was going to take appropriate action. As it turned out, he clearly failed to do so. We now know how effectively the then Chief of Defence Staff dealt with the situation. I am determined that this lapse in our national security will never recur. Accordingly, a key element of our new security arrangement is the creation of a superior nation-wide intelligence system that will provide Government with prompt and accurate information on the security situation in the country, on a day-to-day basis, so that any threat to the security of our country can be identified immediately and measures taken to avert it.

### CALL FOR REMNANTS OF THE JUNTA TO LAY DOWN THEIR ARMS

10. My Government is aware that some remnants of the Junta will be interested to give themselves up. To them, I offer the assurance that any combatant that gives himself up will be treated humanely in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Geneva Convention and its additional Protocols. For those who still want to continue to fight I say, the time is up for you to decide to join the rest of our peace-loving compatriots to rebuild the country. I therefore appeal to you all to surrender to ECOMOG forthwith and renounce all violence against the innocent people of this country, so that together we can re-embark on the road of economic development and restore the glory of our once prosperous and highly respected nation.

### THE PEACE PROCESS

11. There has been speculation in some quarters about Government's position on the peace process and in particular the ABIDJAN PEACE ACCORD and the CONAKRY PEACE PLAN. I have always maintained that peace and reconciliation are basis and crucial elements in our efforts to restore long-term stability and prosperity in our country. Even in the radically changed circumstances in which we now find ourselves, the legal, political, security and social provisions contained in these two documents provide us a useful basis for the development of an effective policy on peace and reconciliation. Already some of the provisions of these documents have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented. Others have been overtaken by events.

## DEMOBILISATION

12. A key provision in both the Abidjan Peace Accord and the Conakry Peace Plan is the implementation of a comprehensive programme of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of ex-combatants, to be carried out alongside rehabilitation and reconstruction. Moreover, programmes and projects are currently being prepared in consultation with the donor community who will, hopefully, provide funding for their implementation. In this regard, some of the donors have made certain suggestions for the smooth and effective implementation of these programmes and projects. Government has given due consideration to these suggestions and has found them to be useful. Accordingly, a decision has been taken to implement them.

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

13. Our foreign policy thrust will remain to be the protection and security of our nation and the promotion of our domestic prosperity. Together with these fundamental interests is our commitment to upholding the principles of freedom, the rule of law and human rights.

14. As a result of the seven years of rebel war and the AFRC/RUF junta misrule, Sierra Leone's economic base has been adversely affected, thereby obstructing its commitment to various International Organisations. This is notwithstanding my Government is actively addressing the situation with a view to meeting its financial obligations to these Organisations. Equally so the supportive role of the International Community in enhancing and sustaining the peace and security of this nation must be emphasised. Permanent security and peace are the pivots which will support the much needed economic recovery of this country and its ability to be an effective participant in global affairs.

## NATIONAL ECONOMY

16. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, you will recall that at the time of the May 25 event, our over-all economic performance and outlook were extremely favourable. the inflation rate was six percent, we had projected for a ten-percent real growth in our economy and we had attained some measure of stability in our exchange rate. Also, upon the return of my government this year, we discovered that all those gains have been reversed. The economy has suffered an unprecedented down turn in performance. This resulted from the destruction in productive assets and the basic social and economic infrastructure. Inflation was almost one hundred percent; the exchange rate had depreciated to Le 1,620 to the US dollar compared to Le 850 in May 1997. Economic growth was a negative 25 percent in nominal terms. In these circumstances, the task before us is formidable. As we strive to end poverty in our country, we must also endeavour to ensure economic stability.

17. While we are determined to redouble our efforts, we continue to look up to our international partners, to show understanding and support for our current plight. I will outline below areas where

we expect some progress or where we are confident of international support. But we must all be conscious of the fact that Sierra Leone will be built economically, socially or otherwise only by Sierra Leoneans. It is understandable that we should expect the International Community to give us the necessary support but we must do the job ourselves. I know the task is not going to be easy. I am aware of the suffering of our people, and of their wish to see benefits flowing from their commitment to democracy, that they want their basic needs taken care of, that food, clothing, shelter, clean water, health care and education be made available. Government is determined that our people's needs would be realised. Hence, even though we face difficult challenges, with your understanding, commitment and support we shall succeed.

18. Throughout my working life, and particularly since resuming office as your President, I have been deeply concerned and perturbed by the depth of poverty endemic in our country. It is not an enviable state that one's country should be in the last position in the Human Development Index and it is most distressing that over 60 percent of one's countrymen are absolutely poor. I find it intolerable, unethical and immoral that a country as richly endowed as ours, should allow such a situation to continue. It is even more unconscionable to rationalise its existence and persistence. I believe that Honourable Members and all of us who suffered the nightmare of AFRC/RUF misrule are sufficiently chastened to rededicate ourselves to the cause of our country and its agenda for development.

### REVIVAL OF THE ECONOMY

19. Ensuring a sound and stable macro-economic framework and fiscal discipline remains at the heart of my government's strategy to create an environment conducive to the fostering of broad-based private sector-led growth and poverty reduction.

20. The main objectives of my government's fiscal programme in the medium term are to reduce significantly the overall budget deficit, improved methods to control expenditure, and provide support to the (3 RRR) Reconstruction Rehabilitation Reintegration programme. Efforts to increase revenue, especially in the marine and mining sectors, will be undertaken to reduce the burden on income and of indirect taxes. Government will maintain a tight rein over unproductive spending.

21. Following a comprehensive review of our tax structure, my government will introduce new income tax legislation to Parliament this session. The enactment of this Bill would lower the corporate income tax rate, improve capital allowances and investment incentives. Furthermore, Government will strengthen tax administration through the establishment of an independent Income Tax Authority and work towards establishing an independent Customs and Excise Authority during this parliamentary session. In the meantime, the operations of the Customs and Excise Department will be fully computerised for an efficient control of imported and exported goods and to provide timely and accurate accounts and statistics. The increase in revenue resulting from these

improvements, coupled with the reduction in resources allocated to military spending made possible by the improved security situation, will allow government to increase spending on social services in real terms. This will include provisions for a social safety net that target groups most vulnerable to the economic and social adjustment process.

22. The Bank of Sierra Leone will pursue its open market operations with a view to rationalising monetary policy and maintaining price stability. Monetary policy will also aim at ensuring sufficient growth in credit to the private sector in support of economic reconstruction. In appropriate programme areas, the Bank will also promote the rehabilitation of productive sectors and at the same time design and develop new policies and products aimed at promoting private and home finance schemes.

In a conscious effort at strengthening and providing institutional support to the finance and banking sector, my government has completed a review of the 1970 Banking Act. A draft Bill will be forwarded to this House soon. In consonance with this exercise, appropriate policies and guidelines are also being formulated to address the operations of other financial institutions within the overall context of an open, responsive and competitive system. The provision of banking services, including the rural banking schemes and financial intermediation, outside of Freetown will be given high priority. Non-bank private sector activity will also be encouraged particularly in micro-credit delivery and extension services to farmers.

24. Transparency, accountability and financial control over government expenditure and revenue have been seriously eroded over the last few years. You are no doubt aware that serious payroll anomalies and other misappropriations were discovered in the manual and computerised accounting systems being operated in the Accountant-General's Department and other ministries and departments reminiscent of the voucher and squandergates of yesteryears. This is one reason why government has embarked on the restructuring of the administration. I (phrase indistinct) agencies have followed a similar pattern. It is my government's intention to pursue this policy in the lower echelons of the public service and other functional areas until we achieve once more the country's previous record of having the best public service in the sub-region.

25. In keeping with the global trend to reduce the role of the State in the economy, significant strides were taken in the area of Public Enterprise Reform during the first year of my administration. In this regard, government divested its equity interest in a number of state-owned commercial and quasi-commercial enterprises. This policy will be further pursued.

## PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

26. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the development of the private sector remains the major focus of my government in the economic and social spheres. Within the broad framework of private sector development, my government's policy is to encourage well-structured and effective

partnerships on a tripartite basis to include government, Sierra Leonean investors and foreign direct investment.

27. My government is fully committed to the effective empowerment of credible indigenous Sierra Leone businessmen and women in crucial areas of our national economy. In pursuance of this policy, I have already commissioned the design and eventual establishment of a scheme aimed specifically at indigenous entrepreneurship by properly institutionalising their activities and helping them access financial resources.

28. During the year, my government will introduce legislation for an investment code to provide better information for foreign and local investors. Furthermore, Government will continue to pursue the establishment of Export Processing Zones.

29. Although government's programme for the year is being outlines to you only today, I am sure that all of you are aware that since my return, my government has been engaged in a host of humanitarian and emergency operations. These have been essentially short-term interventions designed to address the situational problems related to repatriation, provision of medical supplies, the rehabilitation and reopening of schools, the payment of school fees and examination fees for all school children and students in institutions of higher learning and, generally, the restoration of normal life.

## EDUCATION

30. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, education lies at the core of my government's policy. It is the gateway to poverty-reduction and jobs. Government's policy will be anchored on the following planks: provide a broad-based education from Class I to JSS III children; increase access to basic education; expand technical and vocational education within the formal and non-formal sectors; increase opportunities for the acquisition of literacy, numeracy, technical and vocational skills; provide equity in education; and develop in children relevant skills.

31. During the next few months, my government will give priority to the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs for schools and tertiary institutions throughout the country. Government is conscious that schools cannot operate efficiently and effectively without basic teaching and learning materials.

32. Government will adopt a decentralised scheme to hand over the financial management of schools to the employing authorities. To ensure consistency in the curriculum, government will strengthen and inspectorate to enable it to better supervise school and their financial management.

33. Noting the rationale to expand access at the Basic Education Level, my government is however very conscious of the weak delivery and lack of relevance of programmes at the tertiary level.

Government will therefore strengthen its resolve to restructure Tertiary Education, improve access at the regional level, expand its programmes to increase relevance, and improve financial management.

34. My government is committed to encouraging schools and tertiary institutions to use sport programmes as a vehicle to mould character, promote healthy lifestyle and instill the will to excel. In this regard, appropriate action will be taken to provide schools with basic facilities and equipment for games and sports. Local authorities and the private sector will be encouraged to complement government efforts. My government will introduce integrated youth development programmes, which will enable youths to direct their energies into more productive ventures.

### HEALTH

35. My government will strengthen the health care delivery system. We are committed to drastically reducing the high maternal and infant rates. The focus will be on:

1. the provision of a decentralised network of sound health facilities at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels with sufficient logistical support to ensure functionality and accessibility;
2. the promotion of environmental health education to ensure clean environment, supply of safe drinking water and the improvement of general sanitation in both the rural and urban areas;
3. the control and prevention of communicable diseases through the mother and child expanded programme of immunisation (EPI).

36. Within the next 12 months, my government will take all necessary steps to rehabilitate all looted hospitals and health centres. The cost recovery and procurement systems will be reformed and made more efficient, and the medical stores department will be decentralised.

### AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

37. The most devastating effects of the rebel war and the AFRC/RUF misrule to agricultural productivity has been the displacement of nearly 250,000 farm families and the destruction of the rural infrastructure. The urgent task of government is to restore pre-war levels of food production capacity through the rehabilitation of farmers and agricultural infrastructure and embarking on the transition to full-scale agricultural development.

38. The policy focus will be on empowerment of farmers through collaboration with NGO's, strengthening of farmers' organisations, encouraging private sector participation, and promotion of food diversification programmes aimed at achieving sustainable food security. To this end, government in collaboration with international donors will provide seeds, tools and other agricultural implements to farmers. Government's intention is that the development of the



agriculture sector will follow the Agriculture Master Plan already formulated. We expect this to provide the framework for more Sierra Leoneans to be gainfully employed in farming.

## LANDS AND HOUSING

39. Government attaches priority to home ownership and the provision of housing to our deprived citizens. My government is in the process of returning the Goderich estate otherwise known as 7th Battalion to the Housing Corporation. Partnerships with investors will be established for rehabilitating the OAU and Hill Cot estates. Plans are being worked out to commence Phase II of the African Housing Fund Project already in Kambia District. This will be extended to Bo and Pujehun Districts. During the life of the present Parliament, my government will establish a National Social Security and Provident Fund Scheme.

40. My government is in the process of establishing a Green Belt along the hill-slopes in the Western Area to serve as a demarcation line beyond which no development will be tolerated. This Green Belt will also serve as a protective mechanism against soil erosion and landslide as experienced in the 1996 rainy season with loss of property and fatal consequences.

41. For effective management of state lands, government has instituted a fact-finding Committee to look into the sale and release of state lands in the Western Area. This Committee will investigate all leases and freehold from 1986 to date and make appropriate recommendations to government on the allocation, use and probable retrieval of state lands and properties.

## SOCIAL WELFARE, GENDER AND CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS

42. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, the events of May 25th, 1997 and its aftermath led to the establishment of a Child Protection Committee incorporating Child Welfare oriented NGO's. The objective is to respond immediately to the problems of war as they affect children. In addressing the psychosocial needs of war traumatised children and in collaborating with NGO's, guides have been trained and are expected to implement direct psychosocial intervention programmes intended to lighten the traumatic experiences of children and their parents.

43. Sensitisation of communities and families on peace education, reconciliation and the protection of the rights of children are entrenched in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Government will in the coming year ensure the formulation and implementation of policies and laws that are in harmony with the provisions contained in the Convention.

44. The reviewing of the Bill of the Rights of the Child which aims at ensuring that no form of discrimination shall be practiced against any child on the grounds of sex, religion, customs, tribe, rural or urban background which was being discussed with members of the legal profession and

other stake holders will be further pursued. Government will intervene directly to address the psychosocial needs of war amputees and ex-abductees.

45. To integrate women into the development process at all levels so as to improve their quality of life through meaningful programmes, my government will work on the report on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Issues of violence, sexual exploitation, abuse, situation of war widows, etc., will be given serious and special consideration.

46. In line with government's wish to have prisoners rights respected, modalities are being put in place to have the New England Camp of the Central Prison rehabilitated.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### WORKS AND TRANSPORT

47. The main objective of government for the road sector is to provide and maintain the road network in an all weather condition year round. The Peninsula Road project progressed steadily until the May 25th coup, which brought work to an abrupt end. Work on the sector from Kent village to Goderich will commence in October.

48. I am happy to report that tender documents for the Freetown/Conakry Highway Project were received in Freetown a few days ago, meaning that Tenders for the construction of the road will be launched shortly. We have also received the green light from the European Union to launch the Tender for the improvement of the Masiaka/Makeni Highway.

49. There will also be a rationalisation of the ferry services between Lungi and Tagrin. I am pleased to announce that the Emir of Kuwait during my visit to that Emirate agreed to make financial provision for the purchase of ferries.

In the meantime, the African Development Bank is pressing on with arrangements regarding the recommencement of the preparation of the terms of reference for the proposed Lungi bridge which was abruptly interrupted by the coup.

## ENERGY AND POWER

52. The sever years unprovoked rebel war, which inflicted damage on infrastructure, has reduced the proportion of the Sierra Leone population with access to clean drinking water from 55% in 1990 to 35% at the moment. My government views this situation with grave concern. A Quick Action Programme has been formulated requesting external support to improve this deplorable situation.

53. The Guma Valley Water Company is presently engaged in the execution of the Freetown Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project, the Sewerage Improvement Works, Universal Water Metering and Distribution System, Construction of Bulk Transfer Mains from Congo Cross to Dan Street, and from Africanus Road to Wellington and the Little Guma Diversion. It is envisaged that all these projects will be completed within twelve months. The Bumbuna Hydro-electric Project was scheduled for the production of 50 megawatts of electricity by the end of this year. The completion date must regrettably now be deferred to the year 2000.

54. However, work on the 6.3 MW generator funded by the World Bank is expected to resume shortly. This will increase the capacity of Kingtom Power Station to 25 MW sufficient to ensure that the constant power cuts in Freetown cease by the middle of next year.

### MINERAL RESOURCES

55. Government is actively reviewing the existing Mineral Resources Development Policy and the Mines and Minerals Act of 1996 with a view to adopting a new and comprehensive policy that will address the problems now faced by the mining sector. The revised Mines and Minerals Act will be the implementing arm of the policy so adopted. These will be geared towards the realisation of:

- The rebuilding of the confidence of the investors and other interested parties to resume operations in the mining industry as soon as the mining areas are adequately secured.
- The mandatory submission of rehabilitation programmes for mined out areas for approval by all large scale mining ventures and the close monitoring of the implementation of such programmes.

56. The adoption of an anti-smuggling programme that will provide for:

1. The reduction of the number of dealers and exporters
2. The strengthening of the monitoring arm of the Ministry
3. The funding of an incentive scheme for compensation for informants
4. The imposition of heavy penalties and serious sanctions on defaulters.

### INFORMATION

57. Plans are afoot as a result of a media support project funded by United Kingdom/Department for International Development (DFID) to strengthen the print media and to expand radio and television, and telecommunications facilities nation wide. Meanwhile my government is actively considering proposals for the establishment of SLBS as an autonomous corporation. The establishment of SLBS as a corporation will enable it to operate on commercial lines with full discretion as to its news content and programming, with unfettered access to the citizenry.

## TOURISM

58. My government realises that in order to achieve the growth and development of tourism, it is necessary to facilitate increased private sector participation in this industry. Consequently government will provide the necessary incentives and general enabling environment to facilitate an increase in the level of investments for the provision of appropriate facilities for tourism.

59. As a result of seven years of civil conflict, tremendous damage has been done to the tourist industry and the image of this country in general. Government will therefore embark on an image-building campaign to restore the confidence of tourists from abroad. The Hotel and Tourism Training Centre will be activated and the 1990 legislation on the operations of the tourist industry will be reviewed to respond to changes that have occurred in the last seven years. All efforts will be made to resuscitate the hotels with possible incentives to the proprietors.

## THE POLICE FORCE

62. No doubt a lot has been said about the present state of the Police Force, i.e., low capability, indiscipline, loss of confidence in their performance, questions of credibility, the size, the quality and politicisation, etc. Whilst I have appointed a new Police Council charged with the responsibility of recruitment and training, promotions, transfers and discipline etc., at the same time government is aware of the need to reform the restructure the entire force and put in place more relevant training programmes and matching equipment to improve effectiveness.

It is the plan of my government to undertake such reform measures to ensure appropriate organisational structures and operational capacity. In this regard, we have already received with appreciation the commitment of some donor agencies to assist with funds for technical assistance, logistics and training.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

60. My government recognises the problems inherent in over-centralisation. Our present aim is to ensure the restoration of a decentralized system.

We are reviewing proposals on local government reform which provides for a comprehensive plan of action consisting of thirteen programmes covering the drafting of appropriate legislation, the establishment of a boundaries commission, the establishment of a local government service commission, and local election programme to elect by popular vote new activated local government systems. Concomitant with these activities, anomalies will be identified particularly in the areas relating to the election of paramount chiefs and other national administrative authorities.

Raising the standard of living of the rural poor through capacity building, rural reconstruction programmes, micro financed projects for skills, developments, etc. will be used to strengthen Government's commitment to rural development. These activities will be undertaken in close collaboration with other government agencies and NGO's.

61. The National Registration Secretariat was established by government to undertake the registration of citizens and to issue identity cards. We do know that the effective operation of the Secretariat was hindered by a number of factors, some of which were outside the control of the Secretariat, i.e., funding. With the present security situation we plan to effectively re-institute the registration of all immigrants and nationals and to issue them with appropriate ID cards. This process will be of immense benefit to indigenes and the nation as a whole.

### ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

63. Government was unable to pursue legislative plans due to the anarchy that engulfed the country. During this session government intends to pursue the implementation of the Project Agreement concluded in April, 1997 with the United Kingdom Department for International Development for a grant to undertake a Law Development Project. This project involves institutional strengthening, a legislative reform programme to update the laws which are out-moded, logistics, and training.

64. Government also intends to examine the Administration of Estates Act (Cap. 45) in order to simplify the administration of estates and finally to do away with the problem of illegitimacy by law. The area of land title registration would also be studied and examined in order to minimise the legal disputes over title to land. Government also intends to study the registration of marriage in order to regularise the present unsatisfactory position and to make it mandatory to register all types of marriages, especially those done under customary law.

### CIVIL SOCIETY

65. Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members, of serious concern to my government is the apparent lack of proper understanding of democracy in a modern state. Some of the conflict situations that we have recently experienced in our country would appear to have emerged from this situation. Moreover, certain concepts have either not been understood or have been so widespread in their negative effects that they have seriously damaged the fabric of our society: for example, patriotism is not fully understood by most of us. We see the government as owing us everything, but we as individuals owe nothing to the State. This is wrong. Patriotism has to be reciprocal.

66. Secondly, the common adage that 'learning is better than silver and gold' would appear to have been changed in Sierra Leone to mean 'silver and gold are better than learning'.

67. To address this situation, Government has decided to embark on a serious Civic Education Programme by insisting that civic education should be an integral part of the curriculum of all schools. To this effect, a programme is being developed and government will also prepare the necessary legislation to give full effect to this policy.

68. We have already taken the initiative of discussing with both the European Union and the UNDP for support, and both agencies have already indicated their willingness to finance the procurement of equipment to enable our TV and Radio to be functioning in every corner of Sierra Leone, and will also provide experts in civic education to assist in getting us to change our negative attitudes and embrace the true meaning of democracy and patriotism. To this end, the European Union has just committed funds to the tune of 224 million leones, for emergency purchase of equipment for SLBS/TV. A European Union consultant is currently in the country working with two national counterparts to prepare a wider civic education programme for European Union funding.

69. My government has only been in office for the past two months. We are using our very best endeavours to salvage the economy and bring back on track developmental programmes to where we left off on 23rd May last year. However, some of our compatriots appear to be in such great hurry to put the nightmare of the past behind them, and are already complaining of lack of any progress in implementing the 90-Day Recovery Programme.

70. I would like to remind those compatriots that all our plans to revive the economy and re-embark on development programmes including the 90-Day Recovery Programme require funding. My government has not been remiss in its efforts to secure such funding, which takes some times to access.

## CONCLUSION

71. Finally, I want to express once more my appreciation for the overwhelming support given to me by Sierra Leoneans at all levels of our society, and by the determination of the people to make certain that Patricia's work for the welfare of all the people of Sierra Leone will continue. I take courage in the fact that in this dark hour of our history, her untimely death has served to unify our people socially, religiously and politically. Let us all hope that even though we continue to grieve for her loss, her death will be a harbinger of a brighter future for our country. I know Patricia longed for peace, unity and prosperity for our country and people. Let us all resolve to make these ideals a reality.

Thank you and may the Almighty Allah bless and guide us.