

▶ Key Highlights of the Presidential Address  
Delivered by His Excellency the President Dr.  
Julius Maada Bio

On Thursday 7<sup>Th</sup> August, 2025

At the State Opening of the Third Session of the  
Sixth Parliament of the Second Republic of Sierra  
Leone, in the Chamber of Parliament Building.

*Done by: The Parliamentary Budget  
Office (PBO) of Sierra Leone*

▶ For more information contact,  
Office of the Director,  
Parliamentary Budget Office Parliament of the Republic of Sierra Leone  
Tower Hill, Freetown  
Tel: +23278-221787  
Email: posl2018@gmail.com

## 1.0 Introduction

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) was established in 2017 by provisions in the Parliamentary Service Act of 2007. Its principal responsibility is to support Members of Parliaments (MPs) and Parliamentary Committees on Public Financial Management, macroeconomics, and other Policy-related issues with the ultimate aim of improving parliamentary oversight, quality of laws enacted.

In achieving the above, one critical area of intervention of the office is “SIMPLIFYING COMPLEXITIES” for MPs and committees. That includes simplifying documents from the executive arm of government for the easy understanding of Parliament.

It is in respect of the above that the PBO has summarised the presidential address as presented below:

## SECTIONS

### I. OVERVIEW

The President addressed Parliament with gratitude and humility, emphasizing the sacred trust given by the people to lead with integrity, wisdom, and courage. He acknowledged Parliament’s role as the heart of democracy, where decisions shape every aspect of national life, and commended members for prioritising service above self, bipartisan cooperation, and legislative achievements over the past year.

Key accomplishments mentioned include:

- Stabilising the economy
- Reforming the petroleum sector
- Strengthening national security

### *Expanding opportunities for youth and women*

The President stressed that his address is a story of progress, challenges, and vision, not just statistics. He called for renewed unity, commitment to national service, and prioritization of the country over politics.

The speech reaffirmed the Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024–2030) as the framework for delivering inclusive, resilient, and sustainable growth, restoring public confidence, and bringing services closer to citizens.

### II. OVERVIEW TO THE BIG FIVE GAME CHANGERS.

Which focuses on:

- Transforming agriculture and food security
- Expanding human capital development
- Empowering youth
- Driving digital and infrastructure growth
- Building transparent and accountable governance

The President framed these as practical, ongoing steps that are already improving lives and shaping Sierra Leone’s future.

### III. FEED SALONE

#### A. AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY

##### *Goal*

- Make Sierra Leone self-sufficient in food production, reducing reliance on imports.

##### *Achievements*

- *Rice production:* Increased by 8%, imports reduced by 13%, saving \$15M in foreign exchange; rice prices dropped by over 20%.
- *Processing capacity:* Three new rice mills opened, waste reduced, and 30% of WFP rice is now sourced locally.
- *Other foods:* Egg imports down 21%; local onions cheaper than imported; vegetable oil exports started.

##### *Investments:*

- \$800M pledged; \$205M committed to livestock, cassava, and rural roads.
- \$10M credit facility for modern farming equipment and the first crop insurance scheme in Sierra Leone.

### *Modernization*

- Digital soil mapping; biometric registration of 300,000 farmers.
- 420 km of feeder roads and bridges are under construction to improve market access.

### *Climate Resilience*

- Integrating climate adaptation in line with the Paris Agreement.

### *Promise*

- Job creation, youth engagement, and national food self-sufficiency.

## **B. FISHERIES SECTOR**

### *Importance*

- Supports over 1M people, contributes 12% to GDP.

### *Performance*

- 2024 revenues exceeded \$5M, surpassing targets.
- New Quota Management System expected to double revenues while conserving fish stocks.

### *Reforms*

- Digitised fisheries data; launched Aquaculture and Inland Fisheries Policy; introduced a closed fishing season to allow stock recovery.
- Industrial fish production is projected to reach 150,000 metric tonnes.

### *Partnerships*

- Agreement with Egypt for joint ventures in commercial fishing and shrimp farming.

### *Vision*

- Build a sustainable Blue Economy, creating jobs and protecting marine resources.

- Special support for girls includes free sanitary pads, school feeding, and assistance to child mothers.
- Students' performance now matches peers in Africa's top education systems.

## **B. EDUCATION: (Technical & Higher Education)**

- Focus on aligning skills with jobs ("WokDonCam" Project for agro-processing, waste management, digital skills, entrepreneurship).
- Centre of Excellence for Automotive Training 960 hours, 39 modules, targeting young women.
- Recognition of Prior Learning Programme certifies informal workers' skills.
- Digital connectivity expanded to nine universities (23 campuses) via Starlink & ELCOME. "UniPods" to promote digital entrepreneurship & innovation.
- Laws were passed to strengthen tertiary and technical education governance.
- Student Loan Scheme supports 1,000+ postgraduates; soon to include undergraduates.

## **C. HEALTHCARE**

- Increased domestic health spending by 2%.
- Expanded hospitals, trained more doctors, and recruited 15% more health workers.
- Built oxygen plants, modernised hospitals, and provided ambulances to all districts.
- Maternal and newborn deaths reduced by 70%.
- Introduced off-grid solar to rural health centres.
- Swift response to the Mpox outbreak with decentralised testing and training.

## **D. GENDER EQUALITY & CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS**

- Implementing the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Act.
- Strengthened fight against sexual and gender-based violence.
- Passed the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act; introduced the Child Rights Bill.

## **E. SOCIAL WELFARE & PROTECTION**

- The Social Work Regulatory Act and Social Protection Act were passed.

## **IV. HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **A. EDUCATION (Basic & Senior Secondary)**

- Education made a right for all, not a privilege.
- Since 2018, enrolment, retention, and completion rates have increased.
- Built over 1,500 classrooms, improved water and sanitation in schools.
- Trained 20,000+ teachers (14,500 in early-grade literacy and numeracy).
- Continued payment of NPSE, BECE, and WASSCE fees for all students.

- National Social Safety Net registered 84,000 elderly-headed households, providing cash to 11,000+ elderly citizens.
- NASSIT is expanding coverage to informal workers.
- Rehabilitation programmes for drug users, including skills training for persons with disabilities.
- Plans for disability village and skills centres with an India-UN grant.

## F. WATER & SANITATION

- Created the Ministry of Water Resources & Sanitation.
- Building solar-powered boreholes, rehabilitating systems nationwide.
- Major Freetown water expansion projects, including reservoirs, pipelines, and pumping station upgrades.

## V. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SCHEME

- The Youth Employment Scheme was launched to create 500,000 jobs in 5 years.
- Jobs are being created in agriculture, mining, construction, energy, sports, the creative economy, and the digital sector.
- Thousands trained in mechanics, construction, hospitality, welding, and entrepreneurship.
- 250+ young women in new digital literacy and business programmes.
- Youth-led farming and fisheries projects are thriving nationwide.
- World Bank-funded PSSNYE project giving 8,000 young people seed funding to start or expand businesses.

President's call to youth: embrace skills, discipline, courage, and self-belief to shape Sierra Leone's future

## VI. TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT.

### A. TECHNOLOGY

- **Digital Government & Innovation:** The government celebrated innovation at the Salone Innovates Digital Government Summit,

and a young farmer won a presidential prize for a digital farming hub.

- **Efficiency & Services:** The government digitised payroll to eliminate ghost workers and launched a Government Yellow Page to connect citizens with services.
- **Investment:** Over \$100 million from the China EXIM Bank and World Bank is funding fibre-optic expansion, digital skills training, and modern service platforms.

### B. ENERGY

- **Major Initiatives:** A \$480 million MCC Compact was signed to expand transmission and improve distribution. Sierra Leone joined the Mission 300 Initiative, aiming to halve energy poverty and generate over 1,000 MW by 2030.
- **Renewable Energy Goals:** The goal is to achieve 78% (78 percent) electricity access and a 52 percent renewable energy share by 2030.
- **Key Projects:** Ongoing projects include the 108.5 MW NANT gas-to-energy plant, floating LNG hub, and multiple solar projects (40 MW). There are also upgrades to existing plants and expansions of the Dodo-Goma and Bumbuna hydro plants.

### C. INFRASTRUCTURE: (Roads, Bridges, and Transport)

- **Roads & Bridges:** Public-private partnerships are financing major projects, including the Koblo-Gulama Bridge and the Moyamba-Gbangbatoke Junction Road. A road maintenance fund is in place to maintain existing infrastructure (1,403km of roads, bridges, etc).

- **Public Transit:** The government launched 50 Waka Fine buses and opened the Lumley Public Transit Terminal with daycare for 2,500 traders. Plans are also underway for a national policy on electric buses.
- **Digital Transformation:** New technologies like RFID vehicle licenses, biometric driver's licenses, and digital number plates have been introduced to modernise transport services.

## VII. REVAMPING THE PUBLIC SERVICE

- The government has taken bold steps to transform our public service into a modern, professional institution that delivers for every Sierra Leonean.
- The government updated the Civil Services Code for the first time since 2011 for the standard appraisals method, and digitised key HR processes.
- The new service policy bill was proposed to strengthen the legal framework that can embed integrity and merit at the heart of governance.

### A. ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

- In 2024 asset declaration system achieved the anti-corruption nearly NLe 35 million, with recovery 90% compliance rate, and ranked 7th in Africa for anti-corruption on the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index.
- The government launched a 5th Generation Anti-Corruption Strategy using technology to combat corruption in the public and private sectors.

### B. DIGITALISING PAYMENT SYSTEMS AND AUDIT SERVICES

- The government has implemented the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) in 20 MDAs *gratuity payments to retirees*, making payments faster, more transparent, and harder to abuse.
- Audit Service Sierra Leone covers 88% of public spending and conducts performance audits to ensure resources deliver real value for citizens.

## VIII. CRITICAL SECTORS AND CROSS-CUTTING AREAS:

### A. THE ECONOMY

- The GDP grew by 4% in 2024 despite the global challenges
- Inflation reduced from 54.5% to 9.38% (April 2025); Leone depreciated by 5.7% vs. the United States dollar.
- Domestic revenue increased to NLe 14.6 billion, the fiscal deficit narrowed to 4.8% of GDP, and public debt fell to 39.5% of GDP through disciplined repayment and a stable exchange rate.
- In November 2024, the IMF extended a credit facility of \$243 to support reforms, not aid dependency.
- The economy is diversifying into Agriculture, tourism and value-added mining and private sector growth.

### B. TRADE AND INDUSTRY

- Sierra Leone is open for business, with new trade investments from multiple countries such

as Turkey, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

- It was the first African country to complete the AFCFTA Readiness Assessment.
- There was a transparent pricing formula for essential goods to stabilise living costs.
- The manufacturing sector contributed a GDP of 22% in food processing, cement, aluminium, copper, recycling and plastics.

#### C. DOWNSTREAM PETROLEUM SECTOR

- The government is building a competitive, reliable energy market to provide citizens and businesses with affordable, reliable fuel.
- The NPRA strengthened, improved storage and infrastructure under the 2025 Act, and promoted fair competition in the petroleum sector.
- Petroleum imports grew by 56% and storage capacity increased by 86% to 250,000 metric tons.

#### D. UPSTREAM AND MIDSTREAM PETROLEUM SECTOR

- Sierra Leone is positioning itself as West Africa's frontier for oil and gas exploration. A landmark study found over 80 deep-water exploration leads. Early estimates suggest up to 30 billion barrels of recoverable oil and gas.
- \$30 million 3D seismic survey completed, drilling planned for 2026, while participation in the \$25 billion Africa Atlantic Gas Pipeline Project will spur regional growth, jobs and affordable energy.

#### E. MINING

- Mineral exports were \$1.12 billion in 2024, with growth in iron ore, rutile, and mineral sands
- The 2022 Mines and Minerals Development Act strengthened transparency and community benefits, \$6.7 million from Community Development Funds was allocated to schools, clinics, and water systems in Port Loko and Tonkolili.
- The non-tax mining revenues rose 34% to \$28 million. The government is focusing on local value addition, export diversification, and sustainable mining practices.

#### F. THE ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- Climate resilience prioritised action embedded in all developing planning, fulfilling Paris Agreement commitments, reforestation, protecting biodiversity, and preventing illegal construction on waterways.
- In July, the Gola Tiwai complex was designated as the first UNESCO World Heritage site in Sierra Leone.

#### G. NATIONAL COHESION AND DEMOCRACY

- National dialogue has fostered reconciliation, emphasising that the nation comes first, while its diversity serves as a source of collective power.
- Sierra Leone ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in West Africa, 5<sup>th</sup> in African nations; we are the 2nd and 57th globally on the global peace index.
- The Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion mediates disputes and strengthens early warning systems.

- The Tripartite Committee is reviewing over 80 electoral reform proposals through citizen consultations to enhance transparency, credibility, and inclusiveness.
- Sierra Leone is advancing reforms to promote unity, inclusion, and proportional representation, aiming for governance that reflects the nation's diversity and increases participation, including for women.

#### H. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

- The National Civic Education and Engagement initiative was launched by engaging civil society, independent media, and the National Civic Education.
- Sierra Leone improved 9 places on the Global Press Freedom Index; 91% MCC Freedom of Information score.

#### I. NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE RULE OF LAW

- The National Security and intelligence ensure peace, stability and constitutional supremacy, combating crime and corruption, and ensuring citizens' safety while upholding democratic principles.
- National security policing, reducing crime, and new legislation to strengthen policing professionalism and accountability
- Tri-Service structure aligns with national development and, national defence policy implemented.

#### J. FOREIGN RELATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- Sierra Leone serves as a Non-Permanent UN Security Council member and the African Union Peace and Security Council, influencing global and African discussions on peace, security, and justice.
- The C-10 Committee retreat on UN Security Council passing key resolutions and securing United State supports for two permanent African seats through AU coordination.
- Sierra Leone actively engages in global affairs to protect national interests, shape international decisions, and attract investment, partnerships, and opportunities.
- The government is expanding diplomatic solutions to support citizens abroad and maintaining a firm, lawful approach to sovereignty issues like Yenga.
- In June 2025, Sierra Leone assumes the Chairmanship of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, strengthening regional voice in peace, democracy, trade, and infrastructure.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

- Calls for unity, service above self, and cooperation across political divides.
- Highlights tangible progress in the economy, infrastructure, governance, and human capital.
- Reaffirms commitment to justice, equality, and inclusive prosperity.

**END**