

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

On Tuesday 10th May 2022

On the Occasion of the State Opening of the 5th
Session of the 5th Parliament of the Second
Republic of Sierra Leone

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

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1.0 Introduction

The Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) established in 2017 is principally responsible to support Members of Parliaments (MPs) on Public Financial Management, Econometrics, and Public Policy-related issues with the ultimate aim of improving the quality of debate and laws enacted.

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

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

2.0 FLASHBACK

- ❖ .Four (4) years ago, the president’s plan presented to Parliament included strategies to translate campaign promises into policy actions, fundamentally aimed at addressing issues bothering inflation, revenue mobilization, and disciplined leadership.
- ❖ The impact of the global pandemic and economic situations were not anticipated.
- ❖ The government remained focused over the years on providing political stability, economic prosperity, investment in education, healthcare, etc.

3.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES INSTITUTED TO RESPOND TO NATIONAL CHALLENGES:

3.1.1 Development Planning & the Economy

3.1.1 Development Planning

- ❖ Improved National planning capacity, resource mobilization, and coordination of development interventions.
- ❖ Improved relationship with development partners’ right through COVID 19.
- ❖ 1st national digital census was carried out to support national development planning.

3.1.2 The Economy

- ❖ S/Leone is still affected by the impact of COVID 19, and other global crises.
- ❖ Effective COVID 19 health preparedness and response plan, & Quick Action Economic Response Programme (QAERP) were used to guide our national response to the pandemic.
- ❖ Government’s continued implementation of sound economic policies and public financial management (PFM) reforms.
- ❖ Gradual recovery from the shock of the pandemic using critical PFM reforms introduced including expenditure control, improved revenue mobilization strategies, improvement in procurement systems, etc.
- ❖ Le 500bn special credit facility made available in 2021 to support the production, importation, and distribution of essential commodities.
- ❖ Government expenditure continued to focus on priority areas of the Medium-Term national Development Plan (2019-2023),

including human capital development, investment in infrastructure, etc.

- ❖ The part payment was made for the rehabilitation of 1,835 km of trunk roads nationwide, and the completion of 109 km of township streets.
- ❖ More investment in electricity generation, transmission, and distribution including the supply of electricity to district headquarters.
- ❖ The implementation of the national Micro-Finance Program (MUNAFI FUND), which supported 5,328 SMEs including 70% female-owned.
- ❖ Improvement in the capacity of local suppliers in procurement procedures and quality standards.
- ❖ A local content audit is being carried out and the review of the local content act is set to be done.
- ❖ The economy is set to grow by 5% in 2022, and the Sub-Saharan African projected growth rate is set at 3.8%.

3.1.3 National Revenue Collection

- ❖ Significant efforts were made in improving and maintaining tax collection including new reforms.
- ❖ Additional reforms aiming at compliance enforcement, and improved border infrastructure are set to be introduced.

3.2 HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 Education

- ❖ Investment in education: mobilizing additional funding to improve learning outcomes, expanding school feeding,

improving school governance, infrastructure, use of technology, etc.

- ❖ Over 600,000 additional children (especially girls) accessed schools, and 5,000 additional teachers were recruited.
- ❖ Best teacher awards and national policy on radical inclusion introduced.
- ❖ Free STEM education for girls from Class 1 to the completion of university.
- ❖ The "Hands Off Our Girls" campaign helps in assuring comprehensive safety for girls in school and their communities, among other similar policies.
- ❖ More access to technical and vocational education and training in 9 districts across the country. Currently working with the World Bank to train over 6,000 young persons for demand-led skills in various productive sectors.
- ❖ Funds secured (24 million USD) for the construction of six additional TVET Institutes across the country.
- ❖ A grant of 3.8 million USD from the Government of Japan (through UNIDO) secured the construction of "Centers of Excellence" in automobile engineering and maintenance of Japanese-made vehicles in addition to the fully equipped center of excellence to train Refrigeration and Air Conditioning technicians currently available.
- ❖ The 3 newly approved universities will offer a rich curriculum of industry-focused skills in different disciplines.
- ❖ NAYCOM has trained TVET instructors and equipped TVET institutions across the

country, in addition to other youth empowerment projects implemented.

- ❖ The National Qualifications Framework has been developed to guarantee quality assurance in learning outcomes, equity, and inclusiveness.
- ❖ Appreciated parliament for passing reforms that supported government initiatives including the University Act 2021, and the S/Leone government student loan scheme Act 2021.
- ❖ Investment in the health sector has produced more early results than anticipated as we have had many medical practitioners at different levels graduate this year.

3.2.2 Health

- ❖ The government has developed a new national Health Sector Strategic Plan, and a Health Financing Strategy (2021-2025) that increases budgetary allocation for health and sanitation to 12%, and realigned the leadership and structure of the health sector to maximize efficiency.
- ❖ The operationalization of the Sierra Leone Social Health Insurance Scheme (SLeSHI) is being worked on, and the implementation of insurance for health workers is being carried out.
- ❖ The health on Wheels" Initiative was developed to provide the full spectrum of health services to underserved communities. Also, Health Management and Information Systems (HMIS) has been strengthened to provide credible data for decision making.
- ❖ Disease surveillance and emergency systems are strengthened with operationalized ambulance system.

- ❖ Health facilities constructed and equipped with diagnostic laboratories, sufficient beds, and other equipment across the country with an allocated sum of over Le 75bn. Partners intervention in this area could also be recognized.
- ❖ More health workers with different specializations have been recruited than ever before, and their general compensation package has been improved.
- ❖ Maternal and child mortality rates have been considerably lowered, and malaria-related deaths have also been reduced by over 47%.
- ❖ More funding support from partners to the health sector has been received.
- ❖ Plans are on the way for more improvement in primary health care, and also establishing pharmaceutical production.

3.2.3 Food Security

- ❖ The government intends to pursue food security and to establish and develop cooperation ties with Asia-Pacific nations, including Vietnam.

3.2.4 Agricultural Products

- ❖ Over the last four years, extended the area of land under cultivation, supported farmers in a variety of ways, and increased production across the country
- ❖ Major policy shift that protects our fragile ecosystems like mangroves and upland; extends mechanization services (machine rings) in all 16 districts.
- ❖ 19,200 acres of farmland for rice production cultivated jointly by the ministry of youth and agriculture.
- ❖ In partnership with International Organization for Migration (IOM), 200

young people have been trained across the country in tractor operation, basic repairs, and maintenance.

- ❖ 3,000kg of cashew polyclonal seeds have been distributed nationwide to seed new farms
- ❖ Worked with partners to train 39 Youth Contractors on Inland Valley Swamp (IVS) development/rehabilitation and water control in different districts across the country.

3.2.5 Fisheries & Aquaculture

- ❖ Scientific assessment of fish stock over the last two years has been maintained, and analyses and archiving of data as well as developing a web-based database for artisanal boats is ongoing.
- ❖ Thousands of jobs for youth and women have been created in the fishing sector with start-up finance kits in some instances.
- ❖ The government has collaborated with the UNDP to procure and commission artisanal fishing boats for youth groups across the coastal area. 70 boats already supplied to over 1,400 youths.
- ❖ Working with partners, the Government has constructed solar-powered fish-processing buildings, solar-powered freezers, and fish processing equipment, and provided improved smoke ovens in various locations around the country
- ❖ With support from partners, a new fisheries outstation in Sulima, and eight inshore patrol craft have been purchased.
- ❖ Extensive pieces of training have been carried out for fishers

- ❖ The Ministry of Youth has piloted 4 Innovative Polytene Fish farms and 100 youth have been trained and certified in aquaculture techniques.
- ❖ The warrant for the acquisition of 252 acres of land at Black Johnson has been signed, and compensation to landowners will commence soon.

3.3 LAND & THE ENVIRONMENT

3.3.1 Land

- ❖ In the coming year, Government intends to work to strengthen the legislative and institutional frameworks for effective land governance that will improve gender-sensitive access to land resources and streamline access to land for foreign investors
- ❖ A commitment of a USD 40 million grant from the World Bank has been received to finance the development of an integrated GISbased Land Management Information System (LMIS).
- ❖ The government has set aside a National Land Bank of Ten Thousand (10,000) acres of land for allocation to national development projects
- ❖ Seven (7) Joint Venture Agreements have been negotiated with potential Real Estate Developers and are awaiting Cabinet approval.
- ❖ The government has established a fair raffle system for the distribution of land among citizens for residential housing developments
- ❖ The government has secured the funding under the Sierra Leone Economic

Diversification Project (SLEDP) to develop a National Building Code (NBC)

- ❖ A National Urban Policy is being developed and measures will be brought to parliament in the coming year.

3.3.1 Environment

- ❖ The government remains committed to the sustainable management of forest resources and promoting sustainable environment protection
- ❖ The government intends to plant over 5 million trees in the next five years to improve the status of afforestation.
- ❖ The government has installed four marine weather stations that are saving the lives of fishermen, sea transport workers, and coastal settlers, and nationally appropriate mitigation actions have been developed.

3.4. INFRASTRUCTURE

- ❖ The government has completed or is constructing the most infrastructural projects within four years in this country's history.

3.4.1 Road and Bridges Infrastructure

- ❖ With the help of partners, the following major projects have been completed:
 - A dual carriage highway (four lanes) from Freetown to Masiaka;
 - The highway between Bo and Bandajuma (46km) and the Bandajuma-MRU Road (105km) and 3 major bridges;
 - A highway from Moyamba Junction to Moyamba and 4 modern bridges (36km); the Pendembu- Kailahun Road (28km);
 - Hill Station to Regent Road,
 - Sengbeh Pieh Bridge, Savage street Bridge, Gondama Bridge, and Mabang Bridge.

- Two 50M bridges on the Pendembu-Kailahun road
- 163M long,two lane Magbele bridge.
- Lumley-Tokeh road and the Hillside Bypass road are ongoing.
- The government is working to commission those major arterial roads before the end of this year.
- The government has also undertaken expansion and re-graveling works and culvert bridges on 1,800km of roads across the country.
- The government will commence reinforced concrete bridge construction works at four ferry crossings across the country.
- The government has also rehabilitated and reconstructed major township roads in Freetown, Kono, Kabala, Bo, Kenema, Bonthe, Makeni, Magburaka, and Mattru.
- Construction works are set to begin on township Roads in Kamakwei (Karene District), Falaba and Mongor (Falaba District), Blama, Segwbema, Daru, Zimmi, Potoru, Bandajuma, and Njaima Sewafe.
- Construction works on the Mattru - Kpetema Road, funded by BADEA and the Government of Sierra Leone, has commenced and Government is finalizing funding arrangements for the Kpetema - Tikonko Junction section.
- The Sefadu- Kamiendor - Guinea Border road (78km) and the Kailahun - Koindu Guinea / Liberia Border roads and Yenga Bridge are also key priorities on which Government is working for the coming year.

3.4.2 Transport Infrastructure

3.4.2.1 Airport

- ❖ SUMMA Group made its largest investment in the Africa sub-region of \$270M in building a brand new, ultra-modern international air terminal at Lungi.
- ❖ The security and safety at the airport have improved from an ICAO rating of 63.4% to 71.6 against the African/ Indian regional average of 55%.
- ❖ 26 bilateral agreements to improve security at the airport have been signed among other improvements.

3.4.2.2 Marine-time Infrastructure

- ❖ The rehabilitation of the Lungi/Tagrin jetty is at an advanced stage with the waiting halls already completed to meet international standards.
- ❖ Public-private-partnership (PPP) agreement with a Turkish company to provide four additional ferries to Sierra Leone has been completed.
- ❖ To improve maritime safety, Government has domesticated nine mandatory instruments of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- ❖ The government has dredged the port entrance, rehabilitated Berths, and concluded a contract to expand a new terminal eastward.
- ❖ The Port of Freetown has been fully certified and has passed the International Ship and Port Facility Security audit by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and US Coast Guard
- ❖ The government intends to bring to the house of Parliament new Ports and Harbours Bill

that reflects the SLPA Landlord port status and replace the old Port Act of 1964.

3.4.3 Electricity Infrastructure

- ❖ A key focus of the Government has been to double energy access from 16% in 2017 to 32% by 2023.
- ❖ 16% of Sierra Leoneans had access to electricity in 2018; 31% now have access to electricity. In 2018, there were 184,997 registered EDSA customers; there were 255,993 at the end of 2021, an increase of over 70,000 new customers.
- ❖ The average buying price of a 1-kilowatt hour from the Karpowership is higher than the average selling price by EDSA to the public. Government is subsidizing the difference to ensure the availability of electricity.
- ❖ Presidential Task Force was established to put an end to electricity infrastructure theft.
- ❖ The government has commissioned 225kV CLSG Transmission Line from Liberia to Kenema/Telorma substation.
- ❖ The government has executed and commissioned the power purchase agreement (PPA) for the CLSG-WAPP since December 2021.
- ❖ Government electricity projects completed and ongoing:
 - Construction of substations at Telorma, Bekongor, and Yiben, construction of substations at Fadugu and Kamakwie; stringing of transmission lines from Mano-Junction to Bumbuna. Installing electricity infrastructure in 15 out of the 39

communities along the CLSG/WAPP 225kV Transmission network.

- The government has completed the construction of and tested the 6MW Solar Park at Newton, waiting to be commissioned.
- The government has worked with partners and the private sector to extend solar mini-grids and thus provide electricity right across the country
- The government has also completed the construction of six (6) Solar PV systems at Government Hospitals across the country.
- The upgrade of the 33kV transmission lines on the Bo-Kenema distribution network to 66kV is already in progress. Grid extensions in other parts of the country are already planned.
- ❖ The government has received a grant from the Government of Japan to construct 6 mini-grids in other areas across the country.
- ❖ Feasibility Studies for 45 additional solar mini-grids for approximately 8,800 households across the country have also been completed.
- ❖ The government has also developed a framework agreement with the European Union for the construction of 57 additional solar mini-grids across the country.
- ❖ The government has also executed a contract for the rehabilitation and expansion of the low and medium-voltage distribution network for the Western Area.

3.4.4 Water Infrastructure

- ❖ In April 2018, 65% of the population (973,988) in the Western Area had access to safe drinking water. This has increased to 71% (1,094,218) in March 2022 representing

a 6% increase with 120,230 more people in the Western Area getting access to safe drinking water.

- ❖ In April 2018, 28% of the population (434,828) in the provinces had access to safe drinking water. In March 2022, this percentage has increased to 52% (909,974) representing a 24% increase with 475,146 more people having access to safe drinking water
- ❖ Citizens vandalizing water infrastructure remains a critical challenge.
- ❖ The government is rehabilitating the Guma Dam and upgrading the Guma Main Treatment Works, replacing 3.2km of the transmission pipeline from Mile 13 to Hamilton, and also extending the distribution network to other unserved communities in the Western Area.
- ❖ Water meters are being installed in several parts of the city of Freetown to enhance revenue generation.
- ❖ The water treatment facility at Barbadorie in Regent is being rehabilitated and the distribution network has been extended by 4.2km into nearby communities.
- ❖ The reconstruction of water supply systems in six (6) district headquarter towns is underway in Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun, Kabala, Kambia & Mabguraka
- ❖ The government has completed the installation of 12km transmission mains and now working on the treatment plant and staff quarters of the Blama, Bandawor, and Six Villages Water Supply Project.
- ❖ The sinking of 100 Solar Powered Boreholes across all districts in the country has been

completed, and funds have been approved for another 200 boreholes under the Quick win Presidential Initiative.

- ❖ Gravity water supply systems are being rehabilitated/constructed in different places across the country.
- ❖ The National Water Resources Management Agency has developed several regulations on water management that would soon be brought to Parliament for approval.

3.4.5 Petroleum Infrastructure

- ❖ Recent sudden hikes in global petroleum prices affected Sierra Leone the more as a result of weak storage and distribution structures.
- ❖ Sierra Leone now consumes about a 1.3million liters of fuel (mainly petrol and diesel) daily compared to 900,000 liters just a few years ago
- ❖ Recently, a USD 22M All Petroleum Products (APP-SL) storage facility at the old Kissy refinery that had laid moribund for decades was commissioned, and a 60,000 metric tonnes storage facility with modern storage facilities has also been completed.
- ❖ Relevant measures and legislation for Petroleum Exploration and Production will be brought to Parliament in the coming year.

3.4.6 Sport Infrastructure

- ❖ Government of the People's Republic of China, work is underway for a USD 40 Million remodeling of the national stadium to modern international standards
- ❖ With support from the People's Republic of China, construction work on the Sierra Leone

Foreign Service Academy (SLFSA) is ongoing.

3.4.7 Public Office Building

- ❖ The government has spent millions of USD in completing and building new public offices including the ACC, NATCOM headquarters, etc.
- ❖ The Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education will soon turn the sod for a multi-million dollar, multi-story administrative building.

3.4.8 Public Safety and Security Buildings

- ❖ Three weeks ago, the president commissioned a state-of-the-art Myohaung Officers' Mess and a 104Bedroom Single Officers complex at the Wilberforce Barracks for the use of the officer cadre.
- ❖ Much other infrastructural development for the RSLAF are ongoing, including the reconstruction of the Forces Warrant Officers' and Sergeant's Mess and the Other Ranks' Canteen at the Wilberforce Barracks, six (6) Forward Patrol Bases on border patrol duties, Immigration offices in Karene and Falaba, etc.
- ❖ Four fire stations in Western Rural, Pujehun, Kailahun, and Kabala have been completed and commissioned. Additionally, the Pujehun and Kabala Fire Stations have been completed and awaiting commissioning this year, whiles contracts have been awarded for the construction of the same in different parts of the country.
- ❖ Contracts for the construction of fire stations in Port Loko, Bonthe, and Tonkolili have been signed. Contracts for the procurement of

additional fire engines, spare parts, and firefighting equipment have been signed.

- ❖ The government is currently constructing correctional facilities in Karene and Falaba and also building a hospital for inmates at the Freetown Male Correctional Centre among other development.
- ❖ National Disaster Management Agency was established, and currently responding faster to national emergencies.

3.4.9 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure

- ❖ The government has expanded internet penetration by completing the implementation of the National Fibre Optic Backbone Project Phase II, covering 20 towns and all-district capitals, and important locations in the country.
- ❖ The National Telecommunications Commission has started issuing metro licenses to operators to further enhance a wider penetration of the Terrestrial Fibre Cable in major cities and towns
- ❖ Sierra Leone has implemented the Abidjan Free-roaming protocol that eased communications between Sierra Leone and French West African Countries, and there are plans for the full implementation of the ECOWAS Roaming Protocol as well.
- ❖ The number of FM Radio stations has increased from 138 in 2019 to 155 in 2021. Mobile voice coverage has also increased from 79% in 2018 to 93.1% in 2021.
- ❖ NATCOM issued shortcodes (numbering resources) to academic institutions, health services, financial institutions, the Maritime Administration, and the Road Safety

Authority among others to enable citizens to call to access public facilities without paying for the voice calls.

- ❖ The National Cyber Security Coordinating Centre has been established and the Ministry will soon start implementing the USD 50m World Bank-funded Digital Transformation Project.
- ❖ Measures and legislation on national digital development, data protection, privacy, and electronic communications will soon be laid in this House.

3.5 CIVIL REGISTRATION, ROAD & TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

3.5.1 Civil Registration

- ❖ The Government is close to launching a digital ID platform called Electronic Know Your Customer (eKYC). It can be used among other things, to facilitate access to credit, cross-reference, or validate immigration and Sierra Leone Roads Safety Authority data, the first time for the nation to experience such.
- ❖ In line with international best practices, The National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA) is working to develop a Permanent Civil Register of Sierra Leoneans that will lead to the production of the long-awaited ICAO/ECOWAS compliant Biometric National Identification Cards.
- ❖ This Government has started establishing legal identity using singular, securitized, and serially-numbered births and death certificates. With support from international partners, the exercise to digitize records will

enable comprehensive electronic archiving, search, and access to vital events records.

- ❖ The Office of the Administrator and Registrar General (OARG) is digitizing its Lands, Business, Marriage, Intellectual Property, Estates, Gratuity, and Legal records.

3.5.2 Road safety

- ❖ This Government has developed and implemented a road user policy that seeks to minimize the number of fatalities, injuries, and damage to property on the road.
- ❖ The rolling out of a biometric driver's license and a digital vehicle fitness card or life card and an electronic Vehicle Number Plate Ordering System should curb the illegal printing of vehicle number plates.
- ❖ The Roads Safety Authority intends to roll out Motor Vehicle Testing and Fitness Centres that will determine and verify the roadworthiness of vehicles and produce advanced RFID vehicle license stickers.
- ❖ Additional measures to provide access to safer drivers' training and testing facilities nationwide are also being implemented including MOUs with community radio stations.

3.5.3 Urban Public Transportation and Safety

- ❖ With support from the World Bank, the Ministry of Transport and Aviation has completed the construction of transit terminals at Wilberforce, awarded the contract for the rehabilitation of the Central Bus Stop, and installed pedestrian guard rails and street lights at Congo Cross, Lumley, and

other project locations in the East of Freetown.

3.5 MINING

- ❖ Through effective management and oversight, we now witness an expansion in mining activities and an increase in the contribution of the mining sector to national development.
- ❖ The Ministry granted three large-scale mineral rights in 2021 and revenue from all mining revenue streams is increasing.
- ❖ The government completed the Nationwide Airborne Geophysical Survey and the datasets and images are now available.
- ❖ The Ministry of Mines and Mineral Resources and the NMA have developed systems (in-house) to provide transparent, accessible, and timely access to geoscientific data and information on exploration and mining licenses.
- ❖ The government has allocated 1% of the free on board value of exports to community development, and gender parity in the workforce.
- ❖ The government has initiated a study on systematic disclosure, data, and socio-economic benefit to mining communities which are intended to be followed by legislation.

3.6 TOURISM

- ❖ The Ministry of Tourism and Cultural Affairs and the National Tourist Board have aggressively marketed the country's tourism potential and favorable business environment

at international tourism fairs in different parts of the world.

- ❖ More women are being trained and provided with start-up funds to operate in the sector.
- ❖ Additional measures and legislations are being developed.

3.7 SOCIAL PROTECTION

- ❖ The National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) continues to deliver social protection, reduce poverty, and fast-track community development for sustainable peace.
- ❖ With funding from the Government of Sierra Leone, the World Bank, and the European Union, NaCSA made cash transfers to vulnerable communities and persons with specific needs across the country.
- ❖ NaCSA also rehabilitated 176km of feeder roads including bridges in Kono, Kailahun, Koinadugu, and Falaba districts. 4,256 youths gained short-term employment during road rehabilitation or maintenance work.
- ❖ NaCSA has rehabilitated 188 hectares of inland valley swamps and 1,390 hectares of boliland in the Moyamba, Tonkolili, Bombali, Karene, and Kenema districts.
- ❖ It also helped supply cassava and sweet potato cuttings, oil palm seedlings, and 6,280 liters of agrochemicals to various Micro Enterprise Groups (MEGs) and Self-Help Affinity Groups (SAGs) across the country.

3.8 SOCIAL WELFARE

- ❖ The Ministry of Social Welfare, as the Psychosocial Support Services (PSS) Pillar Lead at the National COVID-19 Emergency

Centre (NACOVERC), continues to coordinate referrals for COVID19-related psychosocial needs.

- ❖ This Government has also accessed Post Ebola Recovery Social Investment Fund (PERSIF) supported by the African Development Bank, restore basic services, and provide micro-business start-ups in beneficiary communities.
- ❖ This Government is also reviewing the Persons with Disability Act 2011 to bring it in line with international best practices, and to create an inclusive society. The legislation will be brought forward soon.
- ❖ The government continues to provide grants for the care and upkeep of the aged in the only residential care facility for elderly persons in this country- the King George VI Memorial Home.
- ❖ Working with partners, the Government is conducting a pilot survey on destitute street beggars including persons with disabilities in the Western Area Urban and Rural to design a strategy to take on this important social issue.

3.9 LABOUR, TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, AND NASSIT

- ❖ The Ministry of Labour and Social Security has laid out clear requirements for the issuance of overseas recruitment licenses to Private Employment Agencies, and the same is being popularized.
- ❖ As a result of MOUs signed between the Government and key destination countries on labor and manpower, our migrant workers are

now being placed with reputable companies and their welfare is better protected.

- ❖ Government has, in collaboration with the Sierra Leone Labour Congress and the Sierra Leone Employers Federation, developed legislation on employment, wages and industrial relations, and workers' compensation.
- ❖ The government has also escalated efforts to educate, investigate, interdict, prosecute, and convict traffickers. In addition, Parliament recently enacted the Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Act 2022 which provides for one of the stiffest sentencing regimes in Africa for the offense of trafficking in persons.
- ❖ NASSIT's benefit social insurance scheme now covers 5,375 establishments, 267,419 active contributors, and 28,039 pensioners. To address delays in the processing of benefits, NASSIT has established a specialized unit to facilitate the update of the records of members before they apply for their social security benefits.
- ❖ NASSIT is working with ILO to establish an ideal scheme for workers in the informal sector that comprises the bulk of employees.

3.10 WOMEN, CHILDREN, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ❖ The government has finalized a National Strategy for Street Children by adopting a family tracing and reunification approach.
- ❖ The government has launched a national sexual and gender-based violence response strategy.

- ❖ The government is also reviewing the Child Rights Act 2007 to strengthen protection mechanisms for children and other gaps.
- ❖ The government has operationalized a free Rape Help Line and also established two more One Stop Centres in Karene and Bonthe to provide free comprehensive survivor-centered services for victims of sexual and domestic violence.
- ❖ The government has also established four (4) Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) hubs in Koinadugu District to provide adolescent-friendly family planning and other SRH services in a drive to reduce teenage pregnancies.
- ❖ The government has developed the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Bill to improve women's political and economic empowerment, with legislation being laid in this Parliament

3.11 YOUTH AFFAIRS

- ❖ The government has invested in training and creating opportunities and facilities for youth entrepreneurship through the establishment of a National Youth Empowerment Fund that provides seed money for youth entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The government has piloted Youth Connect Hubs in Mongor, Falaba District; Mattru Jong, Bonthe District; and Daru, Kailahun District.
- ❖ The government has completed ten (10) car wash centers with 349 direct jobs for young people in the western area, and 26 more are being constructed, which is anticipated to provide about 980 direct jobs for youths.

- ❖ The National Youth Service has recruited, trained, and deployed over 1,523 young people to various institutions across the country.
- ❖ The government has also intensified anti-drug education, trained and equipped staff and community advocates, and developed and validated a five-year strategic Master Plan (2022-2026) for the fight against substance abuse and illicit drug trafficking in Sierra Leone.

3.12 SPORTS

- ❖ The return by the national team to the African Cup of Nations in Cameroon after a 25-year hiatus
- ❖ Over 1500 direct jobs and several thousand football-related jobs have been created by the Premier League.
- ❖ More football infrastructure has been built by the Government and the private sector.
- ❖ The government also fulfilled its pledge to create a National Sports Fund that will be administered for the benefit of sports development in this country.

3.14 JUSTICE SECTOR REFORMS

- ❖ The Judiciary has deployed resident judges to Moyamba, Port Loko, Kailahun, and Koinadugu Districts, and also, deployed resident magistrates to Mongor, Falaba District; Kamakwie, Karene District; and Segbwema and Daru in the Kailahun District for the first time in the history of this country
- ❖ Special High Court Criminal Sessions in Pujehun, Bonthe, Falaba, Tonkolili, Karene

Districts, and Koindu town have provided over 823,000 persons with access to justice.

- ❖ The office of the Attorney General has recruited and deployed state counsel to expedite the delivery of justice
- ❖ The Legal Aid Board has established offices and dozens of community advice bureaus in dozens of towns and cities across the country.
- ❖ The Legal Aid Board has provided legal aid services to over half a million indigents and vulnerable persons including foreign nationals since its inception and has also secured a better life for hundreds of women and children who make up 83% of the 39,292 beneficiaries of Legal Advice and Assistance through Alternative Dispute Resolution/Mediation (ADR) in 2021.
- ❖ The government has decongested prison populations using the novel idea of Judicial Week during which the case files of inmates were reviewed. 374 remand prisoners were admitted to bail and 234 inmates were discharged nationwide.
- ❖ As part of the institutional reforms, the government has recruited more graduate staffers for the Sierra Leone judiciary and has also trained staff including magistrates and judges on trafficking and money laundering offenses among other things.
- ❖ The government has established a specialized Anti-Corruption Court, Sexual Offences Model Court, and the Social Security Court which have recorded huge successes in the last year. Conviction rates in the Sexual Offences Model Court jumped from below 3% to 22%. Cases are now completed expeditiously. The Anti-Corruption Court has

recovered over Four Billion Leones in the last one year.

- ❖ The government has established the first Virtual Court to expedite cases, and court records are now better kept and accessed.
- ❖ The government has passed legislation that has improved the business ecosystem for foreign investors.

3.15 HUMAN AND PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

- ❖ The government has launched The White Paper of the Constitutional Review Committee Report that seeks to address gaps, discrepancies, and inconsistencies in our 1991 Constitution.
- ❖ In fulfillment of our human rights, and treaty obligations government is fully committed to addressing issues raised in the annual State of Human Rights Reports presented by the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.
- ❖ The government worked with Parliament to permanently abolish the death penalty in Sierra Leone.
- ❖ The government has repealed seditious libel laws, supported the unfettered practice of journalism, supported more professionalism in journalism, and held the first-ever media investment conference. This among other things has improved the ranking of the state on the World Press Freedom Index moving 29 places from its 75th place in 2021 to 46th in 2022.
- ❖ Following media reforms that the government has initiated, the International Fund for Public Interest Media has listed Sierra Leone as one of 17 countries eligible

to submit proposals for their maiden round of funding.

- ❖ The government has continued its open dialogue and engagement with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the areas to promote democracy.

3.16 GOOD GOVERNANCE

- ❖ The government has sustained its funding of local councils at unprecedented levels.
- ❖ State institutions continue to take concrete actions to enhance inclusive democracy.
- ❖ The government has rationalized the payroll for the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, migrated or upgraded 1,253 staff to assume functional titles through the migration policy
- ❖ The government is working to institutionalize a performance management culture in the Sierra Leone Civil Service, and legislation on civil service code & public service regulation is being developed.
- ❖ The government has granted approvals for 497 civil servants to pursue different courses of study locally and internationally

3.16.1 *The Fight against Corruption*

- ❖ The Anti-Corruption Commission has recruited more prosecutors; formalized the creation of various new units within the institution, and broadened the mandate of the Anti-Corruption Act to include the investigation and prosecution of offenses committed under the Anti-Money Laundering and Combating of Financing of Terrorism Act. It has also won a higher number of convictions for corruption offenses

- ❖ The Commission also extended its mandate to the prosecution of examinations malpractices and other acts of corruption relating to the education sector
- ❖ The ACC has received 87.5% response to asset form inquiries; partnered with MDAs and CSOs to promote public education about corruption.
- ❖ Sierra Leone again consistently increased its score in the 'Control of Corruption Indicator of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Scorecard to an unprecedented 83 percent from 81 percent in 2020. 2017 had a score of 48%.
- ❖ In the 2021 Transparency International's Global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) and Country Rankings, Sierra Leone progressed upwards from 117 in 2020 to 115 out of 180 countries surveyed

3.17 FOREIGN RELATIONS

- ❖ The government continues to shape and advance our foreign policy priorities in line with current and emerging regional, sub-regional and global realities and developments.
- ❖ Government engagement with foreign countries through travels and other means continues to pay off hundreds of millions of USD in grants and technical assistance from development partners.
- ❖ Sierra Leone has passed the MCC scorecard for three consecutive years.
- ❖ We retain high leadership responsibilities at the UN, AU, and ECOWAS.
- ❖ S/Leone serves as chair of the African Peer Review Forum of Heads of State and

Governments, also been nominated as co-chair of the UNESCO High-Level Steering Committee for SDG 4 - Education 2030.

- ❖ S/Leone chairs and Co-chairs so many international organizations including the International Organization for Migration's governing bureau, WTO, CSP7, etc.
- ❖ Sierra Leone is poised to return to the UN Security Council in the non-Permanent category in 2024/25, for the second time, after over 50 years of absence and non-selection
- ❖ S/Leone has participated at the highest levels in the Global Education Summit for the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the 26th UN Climate Change Conference (CoP26).
- ❖ The government undertook high Impact State and Official Visits to the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and Vietnam focusing mainly on the strengthening of South-South Cooperation and partnerships.
- ❖ Our bilateral cooperation engagements with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Kenya, and Hungary have been elevated to a new level.
- ❖ The country has signed and operationalized several Visa-free Entry Agreements to pave the way for the development of tourism and trade
- ❖ The re-opening of a resident Embassy in France is at an advanced stage and the government is planning the opening of two High Commissions in India and South Africa