



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HIS
EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT JULIUS MAADA
BIO AT THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL
CONFERENCE TO ADOPT A GLOBAL
COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND
REGULAR MIGRATION MARRAKECH,
KINGDOM OF MOROCCO – 10TH
DECEMBER, 2018.**

Madame President,
Your Excellencies, Colleague Heads of State
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With great pleasure, I am honored to join you today at this important gathering as we move one step closer to a global agreement on safe, orderly, and regular migration.

On behalf of the government and people of Sierra Leone, I extend my profound gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting this Conference and for the splendid hospitality extended to my delegation. I also acknowledge with sincere thanks and appreciation, the leadership role of the United Nations Secretary-General, as well as the

Presidents of the 72nd and 73rd Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly, whose initiative and dedicated efforts have culminated in the convening of this crucial and timely two-day conference. May I also commend the excellent work of our Co-facilitators, the Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations for their dedication and tireless efforts throughout the preparatory phases of this Conference? I also recognize the staunch commitment of the United Nations Special Representative for Migration, Ms. Louise Arbour. Since September, she has been leading the follow-up to the migration-related aspects of the High-level Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants. Her leadership and diligent work have brought us to this historic moment.

Madam President, Distinguished Colleagues,

Since the formation of the United Nations seven decades ago, "Member states have collectively committed themselves to promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."¹

Globalization has beautifully interconnected us. With population movements and shifts -- some voluntary, some involuntary; some tentative; some permanently -- amidst this helpless and continuing admixture of persons, we must continue to honour our shared responsibility to guarantee social progress and productive and dignified lives for all of humankind. In pursuit of this global responsibility and in respect of our shared values, we adopted the Sustainable Development Goals with a view to eradicating poverty, ensuring peace and prosperity for all

societies, and protecting our planet, among other things.

Madam President and Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

When populations move suddenly and uncontrollably or slowly but persistently, they do so for a confluence of factors including protracted conflict, climate change and natural disasters, poverty, or perceived economic opportunities. I also understand why transit, destination, and host communities of sudden or irregular migrant flows are jittery about a loss of physical and social security or cultural and physical identities. While some see migration as a threat to social cohesion and quality of life, others see it as an opportunity with benefits for both host and migrant communities. We must contend with these dilemmas

of rancor and hope, of fear and optimism, of opportunity and exploitation.

As a nation, we have experienced all ends of this problem. We have suffered devastating protracted conflict and epidemics. We have been neighbors of countries embroiled in violent conflict. We have been both a country of origin and destination for displaced persons and refugees. We understand the constraints on state resources in the absence of effective and adequate international coordination. We understand the rationale for host community antagonism. We would therefore like to commend those countries that have been host nations for migrant populations for ensuring that the human rights, safety and dignity of migrants are fully considered in the Global Compact.

We note that without effective management anchored in global cooperation and coordination, irregular migration will continue to pose serious challenges. These include human trafficking, discriminatory treatment and physical violence, the inhumane treatment and deaths of migrants, and the potential for social upheaval and political tensions in host communities.

This Conference serves as an important platform for all of us Member-States and other actors to work towards establishing a viable framework for cooperation and concerted action on the protracted issue of international migration. We believe that the unanimous endorsement of the outcomes of this Conference by all Member-States will be invaluable to global efforts to deal with the drivers of irregular

migration, promote best practices for governing international migration, address the prevention of unlawful migration and its attendant consequences, and ensure a pathway for lawful, productive and beneficial migration for migrants, as well as for and countries of origin, transit and destination. We must equally address the drivers and the outcomes of irregular migration. We cannot treat a disease if we do not deal with the causes of contagion. Sustainable and purposeful investment in countries of origin will stem the tide of irregular migration. In my country, Sierra Leone, for instance, some of the triggers of unsafe and disorderly migration of our largely unemployed young population across the Sahara and the Mediterranean is largely economic. In line with the implementation of the AU Roadmap on Demographic Dividend, my Government is scaling

up human capital investment in education and skills training, healthcare, and food security. We are also lowering regulatory and legal barriers to investment and making tax regimes predictable. We are open to investing in critical infrastructure that will drive investments and economic activity. We have put in place a disciplined public financial management system and fighting graft and red tape. We are working hard to establish a conducive environment for investments, create jobs, and consequently stem the problem of youth unemployment that drives irregular migration. Sierra Leone is open to investments and trade. I acknowledge the outstanding work of the IOM for facilitating the rescue and safe and dignified repatriation many of our young persons. BUT, we need partnerships, investment and trade and not aid. Only by developing our economy can we

significantly make irregular migration less attractive to the hordes of unemployed young persons.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is therefore a milestone in the history of the global dialogue and international cooperation on migration. The adoption of the Compact manifests a renewed commitment by all of us: member-states, institutions and other stakeholders to work together with the view to addressing all aspects and dimensions of international migration in a consistent and comprehensive manner.

Sierra Leone therefore fully endorses and commits itself to implementing the 23 objectives for safe, orderly and regular migration, articulated in the Compact. These objectives offer a concrete and

appropriate response to the critical issues of migration. They also signal that well-managed migration represents an opportunity to develop migrants and their host communities as well as for respecting their rights and dignity.

We have noted the partnerships and innovative initiatives for the way forward. Our approach must be informed with evidence; we must foster economic development while we empower and include migrants; we must collaborate with stakeholders as much as we implement innovative strategies for stemming and also managing migration flows. We therefore look forward to meaningful engagements and collaboration among member states, institutions and stakeholders with the overarching objective of

ensuring full acceptance, ownership, and implementation of the Global Compact.

I thank you for your attention.