



**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR.
JULIUS MAADA BIO, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC
OF SIERRA LEONE, AT THE SECOND SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS MOMENT CONVENED BY THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
NEW YORK, 20 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**President of the General Assembly,
Secretary-General,
Deputy Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. I thank the Secretary-General for convening this Second SDG Moment to highlight inspiring SDG Actions despite the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented challenges of COVID-19 have further exposed nations to heightened vulnerabilities and to rethink delivery on the SDGs.

Mr. Secretary-General,

2. Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan is our nationally owned roadmap for building a society that is cohesive, secure, and just. It is aligned with the African Union Agenda 2063 and the global SDGs. It prioritizes Human Capital Development, and we have identified SDG4 (quality education) and SDG16 (peace, justice, and strong institutions) as our Accelerator Goals. Those Goals remain pivotal to the transformation of our country and my government remains fully committed to their implementation.
3. Our commitment to deliver on SDG 4 is demonstrated in the increased budgetary allocations to education, free and inclusive access to quality education in line with our policy of radical inclusion, policy reforms, and infrastructural and other developments to support education.
4. In spite of COVID-19, school enrolments have increased; there are higher student success and comprehensive safety indicators; families are saving in excess of \$500 a year per student; and completion and retention rates are also up.
5. On SDG 16, my government is operationalising the Independent Commission for Peace and National Cohesion. There is expanded nationwide access to justice and the Legal Aid Board continues to provide free legal representation to under-served Sierra Leoneans with a 93% increase in service rates from 2018.
6. Government is working with civil society actors, we have repealed the seditious libel laws, and abolished the death penalty.
7. In spite of COVID-19 challenges, my government will continue its work on strengthening governance, deepening decentralisation, and

streamlining domestic resource mobilisation through our Integrated National Financing Framework. We are using science, technology, and innovation to simplify governance, financial management, and procurement systems.

Mr. Secretary-General, Excellencies,

8. Let me conclude by reiterating the call for partnerships and cooperation to deliver on the SDGs in order to achieve the future we want, and to ensure that no one is left behind.
9. I thank you.