



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF
SIERRA LEONE TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

at the

70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Tuesday 29 September 2015

New York

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**Mr. President,
Colleague Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished Delegates**

I congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your election to conduct the affairs of this Assembly during this historic 70th Session. I assure you of my personal support as well as that of Sierra Leone during your tenure.

Let me also convey my sincere appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Hon. Sam Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda, for the effective manner in which he conducted the previous Session.

I profoundly commend the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his constructive leadership of this Organization. Sierra Leone will continue to support the progressive implementation of his laudable Action Agenda. We welcome his synthesis Report which articulates a "call to action to transform our world beyond 2015".

Mr. President,

Seventy years ago, we committed ourselves "...to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom." Today, this is still our task and common goal, and the very foundation upon which our shared and common values are firmly embedded and should therefore be respected.

It is in the pursuit of this task and shared values that, fifteen years ago, the Millennium Declaration articulated a bold vision to eradicate extreme poverty, promote gender equality, and ensure that children everywhere receive basic education.

Together, we have achieved a lot - getting millions out of poverty, getting millions into schools, and breaking many barriers to the empowerment of women. But our achievements are works in progress; our organization is a work in progress. Many challenges remain. Many actions need to be taken in the offices of our organization; many actions must also be taken in the fields, where the citizens of the world live their lives. The two are interlinked, without changes within the structures of our global organization our actions in the fields will be hindered by lack of ownership, lack of inclusion, and lack of irreversible successes.

This is why we commend you for the choice and relevance of the theme of this Session: **"The United Nations at 70 – A New Commitment to Action"**.

We have put forward negotiating positions for reforms of our organization, we have drawn up plans for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and we have adopted the Financing for Development Framework in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July this year. What is left now is action on all of these fronts; action to reform our organization, commencing action in fields where there is as yet no action; taking action to overcome challenges, and continuing action to sustain, deepen and expand our achievements.

The unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and its accompanying challenges are critical to the work that lies ahead. We have learned lessons that are invaluable, made progress that is undeniable; but the challenges we still face are the equivalence of millions not going to school, millions not having healthcare; millions of women oppressed, and millions of people having their rights and lives trampled in the war zones and refugee routes of the world. The challenges have the urgency of a life and death situation for millions.

What we see all over the world - in the refugee crises, in the fight against poverty, in the fight against trans-national organized crime, terrorism, proliferation of small arms and light weapons, piracy, violence against women; what we see in our actions for human rights, and in the efforts for expanding access to health and education; what we see in all these are struggles for inclusion in the better achievements of humanity – achievements of security, safety, peace, education, health, development. Where there is exclusion, people seek inclusion. The poor seek inclusion in a fairer world, the refugee seeks inclusion in a safer world, and we believe the SDG is about building a fairer, safer and better world for those excluded from the great achievements of humanity.

Mr. President,

Making our global organization more democratic, more participatory and fairer is part of the struggle for inclusion the world over; it is a prerequisite for achieving our universal aspirations under the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State on UN Security Council Reform, I take this opportunity to once more emphasize the need for urgent reform of the Council and once again re-echo Africa's concern over the continuous failure of this body to adopt measures that will lead to a comprehensive reform of the Security Council.

I wish to call attention to the regrettable status quo that undermines the principles of equity, legitimacy, accountability and transparency. It also undermines the effectiveness of the Security Council in its pursuit of international peace and security. The need to address the non-representation of Africa in the Permanent category and the under-representation in the Non-permanent category is long overdue and therefore now imperative. Africa's demand for two Permanent seats and two additional Non-permanent seats as articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration is just and provides a framework for a fairer and more inclusive United Nations.

I welcome the recent decision by the General Assembly to further the intergovernmental negotiation process and do hope for a meaningful furtherance of consensus building mechanism during the course of this 70th Session.

Mr. President,

Sierra Leone is very committed to promoting inclusion in governance, inclusion in development, and supporting peace around the world. And we shall continue to support initiatives for the sustenance and expansion of democracy, peace and security in Africa in particular, and in the world at large.

The contribution of Sierra Leone to the United Nations peacekeeping efforts demonstrates our strong commitment to global peace and stability. We acknowledge the Report of the High-Level Independent Review Panel on Peacekeeping Operations in all its aspects. And we stand ready to explore further means to increase our contribution to global peacekeeping to enhance the success of UN peacekeeping operations.

I take this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the men and women in uniform, as well as civilian staff who continue to pay the ultimate sacrifice to serve humanity in complex and dangerous environments around the world. We totally condemn attacks against United Nations peacekeepers, and we call for action against the perpetrators of these cowardly acts.

The Report of the Advisory Group of Experts on the Review of the Peace-building Architecture and its recommendations is a useful document that informs lessons learned, best practices, and challenges going forward with preventing and relapse into violent conflict. We look forward to a constructive engagement during the intergovernmental process within the context of Sierra Leone being one of the case studies and a store-house of lessons learned.

We applaud our collective establishment of the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone (RSCSL) to carry out the continuing legal obligations of the original Special Court. Given the profile of persons convicted by the Court, currently serving prison sentences under the supervision of the Residual Court, it is in the interest of international peace and security as well as ensuring justice that we sustain support to the effective operations of the Residual Court to enable it to fully deliver on its mandate.

Mr. President,

From terrorism to climate change, disease, and refugees, no country is immune from the challenges facing the world at large. Some countries may be able to stave off some of these problems from their shores. However, our globalized world have increased the routes through which these challenges move from country to country, from one region to another, from one group of people to another. That is why we cannot say a particular problem is only a problem for this country or that region. Poorer countries suffer disproportionately from particular problems, but without support from the world to solve them, the problems evolve to haunt other regions, other countries, and other groups. This is the wisdom that we need to integrate into decision making in every country, every region and every global organization.

This is the wisdom we need to integrate into our decisions about climate change. Changes in the weather patterns in the Pacific and ocean currents in the North Atlantic are unleashing devastating floods all over. A week and half ago, we witnessed floods hitherto unseen in Sierra Leone, leading to devastation in many parts of our capital Freetown. Storms rage in the Cape Verde Islands, floods ravaged other parts of West Africa. We believe in our experts' attribution of these disasters to man-made climate change. We call for action not only to lower emissions of greenhouse gases implicated in these changes, but also action to shore up capacities to deal with the effects of climate change. No country, I reiterate, is immune from the physical, social, health, insecurity and other consequences of climate change. We need to integrate this insight into our decisions about other urgent matters - youth unemployment, insecurity, extreme hunger, violence against women, transnational organized crime and piracy. Letting them out of control in vulnerable nations today increases the vulnerability of all nations.

Africa has made tremendous efforts to strengthen the continent's capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts. Countries in the global South have also been at the forefront of finding solutions and providing reliefs from the miseries of the world. They host more refugees than other lands; they contribute more personnel to peacekeeping missions. What is imperative is global solidarity in building capacity in our regions to better handle these challenges. Without this solidarity, the challenges would jump borders; evade immigration controls, jump over walls. This is why we need cooperative and coordinated partnerships to strengthen capacities to respond to these challenges. Our voice as fragile and conflict affected states under the g7+ is a call for country ownership and country-led implementation of the SDGs

Mr. President,

Since 2012, Sierra Leone proactively tailored its development framework to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our vision for socio-economic development as contained in my government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) III, and articulated in the "Agenda for Prosperity" (A4P), was launched in July 2013 as Sierra Leone's roadmap to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The Agenda for Prosperity aims to build a sustainable future for all Sierra Leoneans. It demonstrates our firm commitment towards putting Sierra Leone on the path to resilience and sustainability.

We have to that end, recorded significant progress in strengthening political and economic governance, including improvement in social indicators. My government has continued to place emphasis on the protection of the basic rights of the people of Sierra Leone. We have put in place comprehensive reforms in the justice sector in response to both national and global demands to ensure that the rights of citizens are preserved and that access to justice is accorded to all. The Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone closely collaborates with the Government in building an entrenched culture of human rights and in ensuring that the Government ratifies several outstanding international treaties and protocols as well as fulfilling its varied reporting obligations.

We have undertaken specific reform measures to improve the national investment climate. My Government is keen on delivering results on several priority areas including infrastructural

development, commercialized agriculture, improved access to education and health care services, youth empowerment and employment, women's empowerment, effective and efficient public service delivery and the social as well as political integration of persons with disabilities.

Mr. President,

At a time when Sierra Leone was being commended for its remarkable progress in peace stability and steady economic growth we were hit by the unprecedented Ebola Virus outbreak. The Ebola Virus disease outbreak has taken a heavy toll on the entire socio-economic fabric of Sierra Leone. But with support from our international friends, we fought back. Today, we have almost defeated the evil virus – only one case of Ebola was recorded in the country for the whole of August. And we have recorded zero number of cases for several days in September. Whilst we are making progress to end the epidemic, I commend the United Nations Agencies and the international community for their support and commitment to end the epidemic as well as support for the Post-Ebola Recovery Plan.

I particularly commend the Secretary General for mobilizing, for the very first time, a coordinated and integrated UN system intervention to support countries affected by the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in our region. In addition to the containment of the epidemic, the intervention by the UN and our partners has resulted in enhancing our preparedness to respond to similar outbreaks in the future. This is a useful model that can be applied to contain and tackle pandemics wherever they may surface.

In order to guarantee a lasting recovery, my Government in collaboration with our sister Republics of Guinea and Liberia, have also formulated a sub-regional post-Ebola socio-economic recovery plan to ensure that the three most Ebola affected countries return to the path of stability and prosperity.

The Sierra Leone national recovery plan is based on two main pillars. The first pillar addresses immediate recovery activities that would help in getting to and maintaining zero infections. The second pillar focuses on building national systems of resilience and sustainability that include a viable health system and the establishment of integrated national security and disaster risk management system(s).

With a considerable measure of satisfaction, I must state that the commitment demonstrated by the international community in supporting the Ebola recovery plans has been very encouraging. On behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone, allow me Mr. President, to once again applaud our development partners for their unflinching commitment to supporting Sierra Leone's development aspirations. Sierra Leone is poised and ready to continue working with the international community to regain its pre-Ebola development trajectory. We look forward to strengthening partnerships for effective implementation of our Post-Ebola Recovery Plans, both national and sub-regional.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, as our noble organization celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, it is important to reflect on its Charter, which reaffirms the “faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large or small”.

With the commitment of leaving no one behind, it is essential that we objectively follow a pragmatic approach, with renewed vigor and commitment, to provide for our people a future that would guarantee justice, sustainable peace and security, strengthened accountable and democratic governance, employment opportunities, the transparent and equitable distribution of wealth, a safe and sustainable environment, improved health and relevant education. It is also important that conflicts are resolved around the world, if the Sustainable Development Goals are to be achieved, as there can be no development without peace.

Together, with a firmer resolve, let us rise to this challenge and act towards a fairer, safer and better world.

I thank you for your attention.