

Julius Maada Bio: Promise Made, Promise Delivered

President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone promised to prioritize Human Capital Development in his first term and he has kept his promise

FREE TOWN, SIERRA LEONE, April 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "The flagship of our strategic priorities will focus on developing the country's human capital through free education. We believe in giving every child a good education to develop themselves, support their families and build our nation for the future." With these words, Dr [Julius Maada Bio](#), the President of the Republic of [Sierra Leone](#), launched the New Direction Manifesto in 2018. The document, a product of thorough consultation with all major stakeholders in the country, became a compass through which the Bio-led administration piloted the country's affairs in the past five years.

For President Bio, Purpose-driven leadership, love for people and servant leadership has been at the heart of his leadership trajectory. President Bio has been consistent from cradle to full bloom, and his leadership inspiration has continued to shine as the northern star.

The past five years have been another



Julius Maada Bio, President Republic of Sierra Leone



#5Done5MoreToGo

testament to his fidelity to service. The first test of leadership and public-spirited demeanour came when he took over power on 16th January 1996, as the Military head of state, and kept his word of organizing elections and handing over power to a democratically elected president – resisting pressures from contemporaries to act against his conviction. Happening at the time when military coups were in fashion in west Africa makes his decision all the more riveting.

In 2018, in pursuit of a better life for the millions of Sierra Leoneans, President Julius Maada Bio led the opposition Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) to upstage the ruling party and emerge as the democratically elected President of the country. Five years on, he has performed creditably – scoring high in major development indices as put forward in the [New Direction Agenda](#), amidst global economic headwinds occasioned by COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine War.

In presenting his Government's agenda at the time, President Bio maintained that the choice before the country was between the current 'Business as Usual Status Quo' of the APC that has converted Sierra Leone into a land of poverty, rampant corruption, gross indiscipline and underdevelopment and the SLPP's New Direction's promise of Change and Transformation that will make Sierra Leone a significantly better country through inclusive politics, inclusive economic growth, inclusive development and inclusive governance.

True to his words, the New Direction Agenda has invested more in building people as the most significant resources of the country.

HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

If the primary focus of the New Direction Agenda can be summed up in one phrase, it would be a "Citizen-centric Development Plan." The plan is fixed on improving Human Capital Development, emphasizing education, agriculture and food security - with education being the flagship program of the human capital development agenda.

When President Bio, on the 10th May 2018, announced the introduction of Free Quality Education for both primary and secondary school-age children, some analysts questioned his sanity while also calling his bluff. Some even argued that it was impossible to commence, let alone run successfully. Five years on, the Government hasn't only proved naysayers wrong, but President Bio has also practically given wings to the famous phrase, "where there is a will, there is a way."

It could be argued that the Free Quality Education project launched in 2018 has led to an increase in the number of pupils enrolled in schools and a decline in the mortality rate of children. In 2021, more than 600,000 additional children, especially girls, accessed schools, with 5,000 additional qualified teachers recruited.

ECONOMY

The Bio-led administration inherited a bettered economy due to the misrule of the previous

administration (<https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-west-africa-sierra-leone/sierra-leone-economic-outlook>). With the economy on a downward spiral pre-2018, Real GDP growth was on a downward trend, falling from 6.7% in 2016 to 3.7% in 2018. Critical sectors of the economy were on the decline; mining was contracting and losing jobs. Inflation was on an upward trajectory, with year-on-year inflation increasing to double digits at 18% at the end of the first quarter of 2018. The fiscal situation was tight, with over 50% of the government budget funded from arrears, widening the budget deficit.

It was so dire that the Bio-led Government spent the first year in office successfully correcting fiscal mismanagement and restoring macroeconomic stability.

(<https://african.business/2018/04/economy/sierra-leone-can-maada-bio-pull-the-fat-out-of-the-fire-as-he-inherits-dire-state-coffers>). Real GDP had already risen to 5.5% by 2019, and inflation was down to 8.5% by the end of 2020. Revenue generation had picked up, with daily revenue collection as high as Le 30 billion (Old Leones) and stood at over 15% of GDP. Since Sierra Leone could not influence global prices for essential items (food and fuel), the Government's best bet was to make crucial items available across the country and invest in laying the foundation for local food production.

CUSHIONING HIGH COST OF LIVING, JOBS & WEALTH CREATION

Despite these challenging fiscal times, President Bio increased public sector jobs by over 26,400 workers in the sectors related to his human capital development flagship, including education, health and agriculture. Other sectors, such as law enforcement, have also seen increases in hiring. Salaries were also increased for teachers and the police.

Despite the twin crises, private sector job growth has also increased under the Bio-led administration. At least fifteen new large private sector companies opened or became operational. Together, these companies in metal and steel industries, wood processing and manufacturing created over 1,220 well-paying jobs. The service (hotel and entertainment) industry has added thousands of jobs.

President Bio has also increased the Minimum wage twice in five years - more recently from Le 600,000 (Old Le) to Le 800,000 (Old Le). Pension earners have also increased tenfold from Le 25,000 (Old Le) to Le 250,000 (Old Le).

As he marks five years since coming into office as a democratically elected president, President Bio's commitment to service hasn't waned an inch; instead, his unrivalled commitment to see the lives of Sierra Leoneans improve daily keeps him up at night. It has also kept him fired up to sustain the enduring legacies built and energized him for another five-year mandate.

Kandeh Kamara

The Africa Polls

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/626056557>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2023 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.