

President Bio's 78th UNGA Address: A Masterclass in Diplomacy and Leadership

Sierra Leone appears set to take its place in the comity of Nations

FREE TOWN, SIERRA LEONE, October 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Amidst the stentorian voices from Turtle Bay in Midtown Manhattan, during the UNGA, President Julius Maada Bio's strident call for global solidarity towards achieving the SDGs and climate action was thunderous and precise. Peace and Security in the ECOWAS sub-region, Climate Change, UN Security Council reform, Sustainable Development Goals 2030 and Democracy topped the agenda as the Sierra Leone President addressed the 78th Session of the [United Nations](#) General Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York, USA.



President Bio addresses the 78th Session of UNGA

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President Julius Maada Bio is committed to working with all stakeholders and mobilizing global solidarity towards promoting radical inclusion and inclusive education globally”

Kandeh Kamara

[President Bio](#), who recently won a decisive reelection to lead Sierra Leone for another term of 5 years, spoke on the second day of the general debate (20 September 2023) alongside the Presidents of Botswana, Italy, Spain, and Belgium, among others. This year's UNGA, with the theme: Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all, hosted the largest gathering of world leaders in person at the UN Headquarters in New

York since the pandemic, with about 88 Heads of States, 42 Heads of Governments, and over 650 ministers in attendance.

During his National Address, the President said that Sierra Leone's policy direction resonates with this year's General Assembly theme of rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity.

Providing an overview of the Government's achievements in his first five-year term, he cited

fighting corruption, abolishing the death penalty, increasing education funding by 22 per cent and providing tuition-free access to all school-age children at the primary and secondary levels. He further highlighted the Government's action on gender issues, with its commitment to and recognition of 18 November as the World Day for the Prevention of and Healing from Child Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Violence. Under the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Act of 2022, 30 per cent of elected and appointed seats are compulsorily slated for Sierra Leonean women. He further forecasted his five-pillar-based second term to cover food security, human capital development, youth empowerment, infrastructural development and technological advancement and public service reform.

He also called on Member States to uphold the United Nations Charter to foster international cooperation and urged accelerated action on the Sustainable Development Goals; he

stated that "the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development isn't merely an outline; it is a solemn pact we've entered, committing to crafting a world steeped in peace and prosperity". He spotlighted the rising spate of insecurity and coups in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sub-region and joined his voice to regional and international calls against illegitimate changes in Governments of the region, stressing that "while we emphasize the importance of dialogue, we can't ignore a crucial reality: the ongoing threats to our Continent's constitutional stability are signs of deeper problems". He proffered educational and human capital development measures such as job creation, poverty alleviation and government industry support as tools to combat the current state of things successfully.

"Together, we must envision an Africa where our Governments are not removed by unconstitutional means — not because they forcefully prevent them, but because the underlying causes for such challenges no longer exist", he stated.



President Bio at the SDG Summit at the sidelines of 78th UNGA



President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone

The President also added that he has instituted a National Electoral Systems Review Committee to address historic challenges to the country's electoral process and strengthen electoral integrity.

As Sierra Leone assumes a non-permanent seat for the Security Council's 2024-2025 session after 53 years, he expressed its commitment to upholding international peace and security, with a bias for insecurity and democratic governance ideals in West Africa and the Sahel, stating that "our goal remains to thwart the seeds of conflict before they sprout, to ensure sustainable resources for African Union-led peace operations and to silence the guns decisively and forever in Africa".

He also called for reforming the Council, particularly echoing Africa's demands for two permanent and five non-permanent seats. He requested equitable, timely access for Sierra Leone on climate financing. He concluded by calling for global solidarity in confronting the issues of our day, with particular attention on the triple planetary crises of pollution, climate change, and biodiversity loss. "The multifaceted crises challenging our global community demand unified action. For our collective strength is determined by our most vulnerable segments," he stressed.

Prior to an intense two weeks in New York marked by diplomatic and bilateral engagements, President Bio was the keynote speaker at a lecture organized by his Alma Mata, the American University in Washington DC, which had in attendance over 100 delegates drawn from the university community, business leaders, and members of the media. The President, whose global leadership and strides were acknowledged by the President of the University, Sylvia Mary Burwell, in her welcome remarks, spoke extensively on the intersection between quality education and economic prosperity, highlighting his Government's efforts towards leveraging human capital development as a potent tool for the country's sustainable and legacy based transformation.

In New York, President Bio chaired the G7+ High-Level Summit on the theme: "Increasing global solidarity, sustaining peace and building resilience in countries affected by conflict and fragility."

He also met with the leaders of China, Korea, Nigeria, and Slovenia.

President Bio also used the momentous outing to meet with key development institutions and development partners, including the World Bank, IMF and MCC.

Sierra Leone's outing at the 78th Session of the UNGA presented massive reverberation – as the result-oriented and strategic engagement offers renewed hope and optimism of better days ahead.

President Bio also demonstrated through his speeches, meetings and engagement that Sierra Leone is set to take its rightful place and advance its leadership position in the comity of nations. His remarkable performance left an indelible mark on the world stage.

President Bio's presence and performance at the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York were exceptional. His visionary national address, commitment to diplomacy, and advocacy for global issues such as universal access to education, climate change, peace, and human rights demonstrated his leadership prowess on the international stage.

Kandeh A. Kamara

The Africa Polls

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