



Sierra Leone National Statement

Statement

by

H.E. Melrose Karminty, Minister of Social Welfare, Sierra Leone

at

The Second World Summit for Social Development

Doha, Qatar

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His Highness, the Amir of Qatar, Madam President of the General Assembly, UN Secretary-General, Your Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

1. Sierra Leone is honored to participate in this Second World Summit for Social Development; a vital platform for renewing global efforts toward a more inclusive and equitable world. We would like to thank our host the State of Qatar for its excellent hospitality, **and** It is my privilege to deliver these remarks on behalf of His Excellency Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
2. Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statement delivered by Iraq on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the statement delivered by Kenya on behalf of the African Group.
3. Sierra Leone is honored to participate in this Second World Summit for Social Development; a vital platform for renewing global efforts toward a more inclusive and equitable world. As we reflect on the legacy of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, it is important to acknowledge that many of its promises of social development and human well-being for all, remain unfulfilled for vulnerable persons and nations across the world, including my own country Sierra Leone.

4. To meet the social development challenges facing Sierra Leone, government under the leadership of His Excellency President Dr. Julius Maada Bio, has made significant progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by aligning the country's national priorities with global frameworks. This crucial commitment is further reflected in our Medium-Term National Development Plan (2024 –2030).
5. Sierra Leone continues to demonstrate its commitment to progress through regular reviews and evaluations of development programs, consistently tracking the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. These assessments have helped identify both areas of success and those requiring further effort and strengthening confidence in our pursuit of development goals.
6. Our focus on data-driven governance is evident in the country's ability to make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and intervention prioritization; by rigorously analyzing data and evidence, Sierra Leone has been able to strategically allocate resources and prioritize interventions to achieve desired outcomes, while addressing gaps in development has been a central focus for government.

Madam President, Excellencies,

7. Achieving the promises of Copenhagen and the 2030 Agenda requires tackling the root causes of poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. Sierra Leone has implemented targeted interventions in education, healthcare, and infrastructure development, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture and natural resource management. These actions are laying the foundation for long-term sustainable development and inclusive growth.
8. To improve the lives of its citizens and reach targets set by global frameworks, Sierra Leone recognizes the urgency of realizing the Copenhagen commitments and the 2030 Agenda. We have streamlined decision-making processes, enhanced coordination

among government agencies and development partners, and mobilized resources to support key programs and projects.

9. Through the Free Quality Education Programme, over 2.6 million children, including girls and children with disabilities, now enjoy tuition-free schooling. This has led to significant gains in education, such as high net primary school enrollment rates and robust school feeding programs. Sierra Leone has also experienced economic growth and a notable reduction in inflation, which are crucial for improving household incomes and purchasing power, despite global shocks.
10. The enactment of the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Law of 2022 was a significant milestone in women's empowerment in Sierra Leone. This comprehensive legislation is designed to promote gender equality and makes provision for a minimum of 30% representation for elective and appointive public Offices, equal opportunity for the training of employees, and for financial institutions to prescribe procedures for the improvement of women's access to finance and for other related matters.
11. While challenges persist, Sierra Leone remains committed to expanding opportunities for women and recognizing them as catalysts for change. Despite ongoing efforts, however, deep-rooted poverty and inequality continue to present significant challenges. As one of the most climate-affected countries, Sierra Leone faces threats from erratic rainfall and rising temperatures, which jeopardize its agrarian economy and infrastructure. In addition, insufficient infrastructure, especially in energy and transportation, limits economic growth and access to essential services.
12. In alignment with the summit's objectives, Sierra Leone is implementing a multi-faceted strategy to build a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future. The 'Feed Salone' initiative, developed with our development partners, is boosting agricultural productivity, strengthening food systems, reducing import dependency, and investing in climate-smart agriculture to achieve food sovereignty.

Government and our partners are providing farmers with modern techniques, improving market access, expanding the inclusion of women and youths in rural farming, and promoting sustainable practices.

13. The institution of the World Bank-funded Water Security and WASH Access Project is guaranteed to achieve 90% national coverage by 2035, ensuring that all citizens have access to clean water and sanitation. We are also expanding social protection programs to support the most vulnerable populations, ensuring no one is left behind, with special attention to the elderly through the National Policy on Ageing and the Social Safety Net Programme, which provide dignity and security to senior citizens. These programs enable grandmothers to feed their families and send their children to school through direct cash transfers.

Madam President, Excellencies,

14. Sierra Leone recently enacted the Social Protection Act of 2025 establishing the legal and institutional framework for the development, implementation, maintenance, facilitation, monitoring, and evaluation of social protection programs and promoting poverty reduction amongst other things, with an aim to advance the rights of people with disabilities. The Disability Act has also been reviewed with input from affected communities, paving the way to inclusive education, higher education access, digital empowerment, and small-business financing, shifting the focus from charity to empowerment.
15. Through partnerships and reforms, Sierra Leone is building resilient institutions and enhancing accountability in service delivery. Sierra Leone is also leveraging its green energy transition to create jobs and advance climate mitigation goals, benefitting vulnerable groups. The Clean Cooking Delivery Unit has been established to remove barriers, align ministries, and mobilize resources for a just energy transition. Clean cooking stoves have been distributed to

women in communities to minimize their reliance on traditional sources like coal and fuel wood.

16. To address youth unemployment, Sierra Leone is focusing on skills development in agriculture, fisheries, and digital literacy. The National Youth Service Scheme plays a key role by equipping graduates with experience across sectors and supporting public service delivery, so that young people can be both leaders of tomorrow and active partners in nation-building today.
17. Sierra Leone's commitment to assessing progress, addressing gaps, and accelerating implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and the 2030 Agenda is commendable. The nation's efforts to align national priorities with global frameworks are essential for achieving sustainable development and a better future for all. By continuing to track progress, address gaps, and accelerate implementation, Sierra Leone is on course to meet the goals set out in the Copenhagen commitments and the 2030 Agenda.
18. In concluding, Madam President, Excellencies, I want the world to know that Sierra Leone is now defined not by its past struggles but by its commitment to a better future. Our journey is a testament to the transformative power of resilience, reform, and partnership. Together, let us make the vision of inclusive and sustainable social development a reality for all.

I thank you.