



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

STATEMENT

by

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At the

**GENERAL DEBATE ON THE HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE HIGH-LEVEL
POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I thank you for convening this meeting Madam President despite the extraordinary circumstances we are faced with due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. In this regard, on behalf of the Government and People of Sierra Leone, I would like to convey sincere condolences and deep sympathy to all Member States of the United Nations for the loss of life caused by the pandemic.

At the outset, Sierra Leone aligns with the Statements of the G77 and China, the LDC Group and the African Group delivered by Guyana, Malawi, and Burkina Faso respectively.

The theme for this High-Level Political Forum "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development", is quite apt not only for this 5th Annual Voluntary National Review of the SDGs but also to focus action to ensure achievement of the SDGs despite the serious challenges we face.

Madam President,

It is common knowledge that a number of countries were not on track to achieve the SDGs even before COVID-19. With the outbreak of pandemic, it is increasingly unlikely that the objectives of the 2030 agenda will come to fruition. The need, therefore, for the International Community to respond to the pandemic in a way that puts us back on track to achieve the SDGs and accelerate progress during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development cannot be overemphasized.

Sierra Leone's Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP, 2019-2023) is aligned to the Sustainable development Goals. The Government has completed the first year of implementation of the plan, which demonstrates a strong political will and commitment to service delivery, amid key challenges. Even before the pandemic struck, there were challenges implementing the plan relating to securing adequate financing for programmes, ensuring effective development cooperation and coordination at local and national levels, capacity constraints in managing public projects and undertaking effective monitoring and evaluation. These challenges emphasized the need to prioritize

implementation and strengthening of institutional capacity & coordination, service delivery & performance management, and monitoring and evaluation.

With the continuing impact of Covid-19 still being assessed, the medium-term outlook of the development landscape in Sierra Leone may remain bleak in terms of pooling resources required to finance the MTNDP in 2020 and beyond.

Madam President,

The global spread of the pandemic presents an immense threat to the human race and is causing enormous socio-economic disruption at all levels. This unprecedented situation has impacted the implementation of the sustainable development goals and altered the gains made over the years towards its achievement. It also further exacerbated existing vulnerabilities, especially for countries in special situations who are the hardest hit and the most vulnerable with enormous challenges.

We must therefore in the spirit of solidarity effectively respond with multilateral action in order to withstand the economic shocks of the pandemic. In this regard, we call on the continued support of the UN system and the international community to provide urgent socio-economic response and integrated humanitarian aid, including massive financial and technical support at the country level to allow developing economies, especially LDCs win the fight against the pandemic and be able to deliver on the SDGs. Our sustainable recovery plans must align with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement for Climate Change, as well as enhance public and private partnerships as crucial elements in support of national development aspirations that are closely aligned with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Furthermore, the need to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an essential prerequisite for sustainable development. We are concerned that, for the first time in decades, the trend of poverty reduction is being reversed, in this regard, we stress the urgency of taking concrete and targeted measures to eradicate poverty with increased resources.

To support actions against poverty, Sierra Leone has joined the Alliance for Poverty Eradication with a view to intensifying international cooperation for poverty eradication. Likewise, ending hunger and achieving food security and nutrition for all, are fundamental to the 2030 Agenda, in order to truly leave no one behind.

In addition, progress in sustainable development will be realized by bridging the technological and digital divide between Developed and Developing countries. Technology transfer is one of the core priorities of developing countries in implementing the 2030 Agenda, and in this regard, Sierra Leone underscores the need to accelerate the transfer of technologies, including on concessional and preferential terms, that are essential for implementing a wide range of SDGs, particularly those that can help address Climate Change. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed a greater digital divide, it cannot therefore be business as usual.

Madam President,

Sierra Leone calls for emergency debt relief and standstill mechanisms from the IMF and other development banks, including access to resources being made available by the World Bank Group as part of the global economic response system to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for the assistance already provided by these institutions. However, we are seeking additional grants, access to finance and technical assistance from our development partners, multilateral agencies, as well as international financial institutions, including the World Bank, the IMF, and major regional development banks to deliver urgent fiscal space and liquidity through budget support, extended credit amenities, and waiver of interest payments on debts for the 2020 budget year, for countries in special situations such as Sierra Leone, to be able to invest in their health systems and the post COVID-19 recovery process.

In conclusion, there is need to lift trade barriers and scale up aid for trade, reduce inequalities, bridge the digital divide, address the threat of food insecurity and nutrition, and provide capacity building for domestic resources mobilization in order for developing countries to effectively implement the SDGs by 2030.

Finally, increasing the percentage of ODA given to LDCs is crucial to ensuring an effective response to the pandemic and building resilient economies, recovering back better, and leaving no one behind.

I thank you.