



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

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**STATEMENT**

by

**H.E. Dr. Ernest Bai KOROMA**  
**President of the Republic of Sierra Leone**

at the

**65<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**NEW YORK, Thursday September 23, 2010**

*Please check against delivery*

Mr. President,  
Colleagues Heads of States and Governments  
Secretary General of the United Nations  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Once again, it is, for me, a great honour and pleasure to address this distinguished Assembly. In doing so, let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Sixty-Fifth Session of the United Nations General Assembly and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

**Mr. President,**

I would also like to convey my sincere appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency, Mr. Ali Abdulssalam Treki, for the efficient and effective manner in which he conducted the previous session. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive account of the United Nation's work and his analysis of the challenges facing our global community.

In my statement to you I would like to talk about both the successes that my country has achieved with the help of the international community, and the reforms that are now needed to the way in which we interact and govern ourselves globally.

**Mr. President,**

My Government is sincerely grateful for the international community's engagement with Sierra Leone's efforts to put the country on a path to sustained economic growth and development. Building on this engagement, our country has significantly improved our international standing in many areas:

- The Global Peace Index now ranks Sierra Leone as the 53<sup>rd</sup> most peaceful country in the world;
- The Mo Ibrahim Index records that we are one of the five crisis affected countries that have made a significant leap forward in democratic governance;
- A recent IMF review shows improvement in public finances, with our 4% annual economic growth rate higher than the average 2% growth rate of Sub Sahara Africa;
- And we have also made steady progress in our rankings on Doing Business, Corruption Perception and Democracy.

In addition:

- Earlier this year I was a proud recipient of the peace prize awarded by ACCORD on behalf of the people of Sierra Leone;

- Only last week my country received the Millennium Development Goal award for showing outstanding leadership in the fight against HIV/AIDs, malaria and other diseases - MDG 6;

**Mr. President,**

My Government has also continued to emphasize the protection of the basic rights of the people of Sierra Leone:

- We have put in place comprehensive justice sector reforms in response to both national and global demands - to ensure both that the rights of citizens are preserved, and that we achieve access to justice for all.
- And the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone has assumed a lead role in advising my Government on building a culture of human rights. It ensures that my Government ratifies international treaties and protocols and fulfills its reporting obligations. A case in point is our recent validation of the Common Core Document that forms the basis for all reporting on international treaties.

Sierra Leone is among the few countries emerging from conflict that have formulated a comprehensive action plan for Security Council resolutions 1325 and 1820. My government is determined to ensure its effective implementation, particularly in addressing gender-based violence as well as the enhancement of women's participation in politics and the public sector.

**Mr. President,**

My Government's commitment to free media is equally strong:

- No journalist has been imprisoned in my country since my assumption of office.
- We have transformed the Government owned Broadcasting Services into what is only the second independent public service broadcaster in Africa, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation (SLBC). Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon witnessed the launch of this historic and groundbreaking initiative in June this year. It is the beginning of a new era of access to independent, unbiased, and impartial information in our country.

**Mr. President,**

My Government is also delivering results on the key priorities in my *Agenda for Change* to improve the lives of all Sierra Leoneans:

- We have launched free healthcare for pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 for the first time in our history, improving access to around 300,000 women and over a million children.

- We have also begun to seriously commercialize agriculture, the mainstay of our economy, through commercializing particularly smallholder farmers, where we are facilitating improved mechanization, irrigation and the establishment of farming cooperatives.
- We have successfully made significant progress on road construction and the rehabilitation of electricity supply in key provincial cities and towns, to generate economic activity across the country.
- We have made large strides in attracting large-scale private sector investors from international companies, following the Sierra Leone Trade and Investment Forum in London last year.

Further to maintain macroeconomic stability and make these achievements sustainable, my Government also remains firmly committed to the fight against corruption.

Despite this progress, many challenges remain. I am proud of what Sierra Leone has achieved so far – but we still need to further enhance our capacity to promote and protect human rights, establish good governance and managerial capacity across the whole public sector, and fight corruption and narcotic drug trafficking. For this our country will need further technical assistance and cooperation, private capital investments and transfers of technology.

Most importantly, we are also not oblivious of the imperative of consolidating peace through enhanced political dialogue, tolerance and ensuring fair electoral process.

With this and our political resolve, we will make further progress towards peace, security and a stable, open democracy.

**Mr. President,**

Let me now turn to the theme of this 65<sup>th</sup> session: *re-affirming the central role of the United Nations in global governance.*

It could not have been better timed than at a moment when the global community is grappling with myriad challenges within the international system. The end of the ‘cold war’, together with an explosion in information and communication technologies gave rise to a new paradigm of ‘flexible or lose’, functional coalitions involving state and non-state actors. A new configuration of interdependent relationships of economic, social, political and ethical nature has emerged from these historical circumstances.

There are fears that ‘globalization’ nurtures dominance of power politics, a growing disparity between the North and the South, intolerance of different values, a tendency to resort to force to solve international conflicts, and a neglect of the environment; at the same time, it has led to a multi-level governance system that is beginning to address global issues ranging from economic interdependence, migration, financial crises, drug trafficking to pandemics such as tuberculosis, Avian flu, HIV/AIDS and malaria.



It is in recognition of this imperative of promoting multilateralism and of building synergies with both state and non-state actors, that I commend your choice of theme.

More than any other organization, we support the United Nations as a centre of global governance. It has a unique characteristic of global mandate and universal membership. This makes it an indispensable and neutral catalyst for the achievement of “international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character”. This centrality of the role of the United Nations in global governance cannot be over-emphasized.

The recently concluded High-Level Stakeholder Meeting on the Millennium Development Goals revealed that progress has been uneven and developing countries, particularly those in Africa, continue to be most vulnerable to the effects of globalization. The prevailing global recession resulting from the economic and financial crisis that struck developed economies has further compounded this challenge. In this context, my Government believes that the UN remains the crucial hub for norm setting and harmonizing the actions of nations for the maintenance of international peace and security as well as the attainment of our development goals.

**Mr. President,**

This Assembly, meeting at the turn of the millennium, decided that reforming and making the Security Council more accessible, transparent, equitably representative and accountable was long overdue. This brings me to the crucial issue that has led us in Africa to consistently reiterate that there can be no meaningful reform of the Council without allocating permanent seats to the continent.

No one continent should have an exclusive monopoly over membership of the Security Council. There is no justification for a discriminatory allocation of seats, nor can we debate endlessly and ignore the realities of our rapidly changing global circumstances.

While the 5th round has not genuinely led to compromise-oriented solution, to distil all positions into a single negotiating document has been a significant step in the right direction. We in Africa look forward to and support a process that will allow the text to evolve during the next session of the GA in an open, inclusive and balanced manner, towards a solution that can garner the widest possible political acceptance by Member states. We urge all delegations to muster the political will required for progress.

I would like to conclude my statement by saying that the moment is here to address the historical injustice inflicted on Africa by allocating no less than two seats with all its attributes and privileges, and two additional seats in both the non-permanent and permanent categories of the Council. I do not need to emphasize that at the inception of the United Nations most of Africa was not represented and that, as a result, Africa to this day remains the only continent without a permanent seat in the Council. To ensure greater relevance of the Security Council within a revamped United Nations system, Africa demands permanent representations in the Security Council with all the requisite attributes.

I thank you for your kind attention.