



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

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**STATEMENT**

by

**HON. DR. SAMURA M. W. KAMARA**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation

at the

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

on

**Thursday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2013**

**New York**

*Check Against Delivery*



**Mr. President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Heads of State and Government,  
Colleague Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

I bring you sincere greetings and very best wishes from His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone. President Koroma regrets that he is unable to participate in the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly due to unavoidable circumstances. He has however instructed me as his Minister for Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation to deliver to you this message from him. I quote;

“I congratulate you most warmly Mr. President, on your election to direct the affairs of this august Assembly during this session, and assure you of my country’s support and cooperation during your tenure. Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation to your predecessor, H.E. Mr. Vuk Jeremic of Serbia, for his able leadership in directing the work of the General Assembly during the last session. I wish him well in his future endeavours.

Let me also express sincere appreciation to the Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his constructive and fruitful leadership of the Organization. Sierra Leone will continue to support the progressive implementation of his five-year Action Agenda, which includes his Sustainable Energy for All Initiative; prevention initiatives as related to disaster and conflict prevention; strengthening civilian capacity in countries emerging from conflict; and implementation of initiatives designed to strengthen the Organization.

**Mr. President,**

Over the last two decades, global peace, security and the economic environment have evidently transformed radically, to where neither the problems nor the solutions are simple. The international security situation has become more complex. Regional hotspots issues keep flaring up and turbulence continues in many parts of the World, in particular, Asia and Africa. Non-traditional security issues such as climate change, people trafficking, nuclear safety, energy, food and maritime security, and financing for development are becoming more pronounced. The use of chemical weapons in conflict poses a renewed global security threat. There is therefore the need for increased multilateral and collective engagement and responses to these complex challenges.

As we are aware, the target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is only two years away. Whilst we take stock of what have been achieved and the challenges that continue to confront us, we should, in keeping with the principles set out in the Rio+20 Outcome Document - “the Future We Want”, embark upon designing a Post-2015 Development Goals agenda in which the specific needs and challenges of every member state are recognized. Failure to capture these specific needs and commitments will no doubt compromise the credibility of a Post-2015 Development Agenda.

We also note that important progress has been made in many areas, such as reducing poverty globally, improving access to primary education for all children, reducing child and maternal mortality, increasing access to HIV treatment and reducing slum populations, to name a few. However, this has not been uniform as inequalities among many populations are on the rise, particularly in southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, where food insecurity and malnutrition are still prevalent. While access to health and education may be expanding, the quality of these services in many regions remains a serious challenge.

**Mr. President,**

This is why the theme for this Session, “the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage” , is timely and appropriate, as we move into the phase of mapping out another development framework, expected to formulate universal goals and responsibilities encompassing the economic, social and environmental spheres. The Post-2015 Development Agenda should have at its core, the urgent need to address the causes and consequences of conflict, violence and disasters. These are universal issues of great concern to the global community. Resolving and preventing conflict and violence, creating jobs, providing further incentives for foreign direct investment, broadening human and financial resources, ensuring gender equality, and promoting human rights and the rule of law are not only fundamental to human progress; they are integral to sustainable development.

**Mr. President,**

Sierra Leone welcomes the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty early this year. This is a significant and historic achievement in our collective effort in pursuit of a safer and more secure world. We therefore hope that the illegal transfer of conventional weapons to the wrong hands, a major source of the escalation of conflicts in the developing world, particularly in Africa, can now be largely regulated and minimized. In that regard, we remain committed to supporting international

instruments aimed at establishing peace and security in the world and an economic order that is beneficial to the rich and poor, the weak and strong, as well as the big and small nations.

In recent years, and despite being under post conflict rebuilding, Sierra Leone's contribution to the United Nations peacekeeping efforts demonstrates our strong commitment to the purpose and principles of global peace and stability. We stand ready to increase our profile in the peacekeeping landscape so as to insure the success of peacekeeping operations. To that end, we will continue to actively engage in all new initiatives for reform of the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

**Mr. President,**

We applaud and acknowledge the human resources and financial support that the UN family and other development partners continue to provide, especially towards the successful conduct of our November 17, 2012 Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government Elections, all of which were held in one day, for the very first time. It comes with little or no surprise that those elections, widely considered to be a critical benchmark, signaling our preparedness to move into a more developmental phase of peacebuilding, were widely acclaimed to be peaceful, free, fair and transparent by the international community. Their successful conduct clearly demonstrates the level that Sierra Leone's democratic process has attained, an experience we are willing to share with other countries in our sub-region and beyond.

Today, Sierra Leone is on the threshold of transformation in its engagement with the Peacebuilding Commission as well as its socio-economic development. With support from the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) as well as other international and local development partners, Sierra Leone continues to make significant gains in the areas of good governance, human rights, gender equality and the fight against transnational organized crimes. In this regard, a number of international treaties have been ratified and national legislations enacted to address these challenges, which have the potential to undermine ongoing peacebuilding and peace consolidation efforts.

**Mr. President, Colleagues, Distinguished Delegates,**

Sierra Leone's vision for transformative and inclusive socio-economic development was initially encapsulated in my government's poverty reduction strategy, articulated in the "*Agenda for Change*", which we rolled out in my first term of office with encouraging achievements, and with residual challenges as well. In my current

second term, we are poised to build on those successes with renewed determination. With sustained commitment to provide improved standards of living for our people and to raise the country to a Middle-Income status, we have rolled over those residual challenges to our successor development programme, *“Agenda for Prosperity”*, which I launched in July this year. This is Sierra Leone’s roadmap to our Post-2015 Development Agenda. It aims to build a sustainable future for all Sierra Leoneans, requiring sound macroeconomic management and fiscal policies for a society with strong institutions to facilitate good governance, the social, economic and political empowerment of women and youth, the required social support for the disadvantaged, increased transparency and accountability, and justice for all.

In taking up this huge challenge, Sierra Leone will continue to welcome the strong partnership that exists with the various United Nations Agencies and other international development partners for the achievement of a well-planned and seamless transition to a more developmental phase of peace building as well as for scaling up support to Sierra Leone’s political and economic priorities outlined in our *“Agenda for Prosperity”*. Sierra Leone, a nation with good credentials as a post conflict country, is a deserving candidate for continued international support.

**Mr. President,**

Sierra Leone continues to uphold its national heritage of inter-religious tolerance and peaceful co-existence as well as the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. In this regard, we remain focused on, and committed to, our reporting obligations to international treaty bodies. In line with the relevant provisions of the Disability Act 2011, we have established a National Commission for Persons with Disability. The current and first Chairman and Chief Commissioner is a person with impaired vision. We have also enacted the Sexual Offences Act 2012 to address the specific issue of sexual violence against women and girls. Sierra Leone will continue to collaborate with the United Nations and other interested partners in promoting the enactment of the Gender Equality Bill to enhance women’s participation in the decision-making process.

We commend the support of the United Nations and international partners to the work of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) by which it has made meaningful contributions to the advancement of the rule of law, at both the national and international levels. With our continued support, the Special Court is expected to complete its mandate by the end of this year.

**Mr. President,**

We are pleased to note that the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has entered into force in August 2013. Sierra Leone pledges its continued support to the work of the Office of the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights as we strive together to maintain universally accepted standards of human rights and democratic governance.

It is in this context that we have also embarked upon a constitutional review process to address major socio-economic and political issues. A Constitutional Review Committee has been established with a broad spectrum of membership, drawn from all political parties, the civil society, women, youth, disabled and even the Diaspora. The process will be inclusive and guided by critical analysis in a broad national debate with the aim to strengthen democratic institutions and promote national unity. We expect the Committee to submit a Draft Review within two years.

**Mr. President,**

As the Coordinator of the African Union Committee of Ten Heads of State on the Security Council Reform, let me once more emphasize the need for urgent reform of the Council. The role of the United Nations should be strengthened and not weakened. The need for an equitable geographical representation, with all privileges, in the membership of the Security Council cannot be overemphasised. Africa will therefore continue to work closely with relevant stakeholders and member states, particularly other non-permanent members, of the Security Council for an early and decisive reform of the Council.

Let me therefore reiterate that Africa's participation in the on-going Intergovernmental Negotiations is firmly rooted in our steadfast commitment to the African Common Position articulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declarations on the Reform of the United Nations.

**Mr. President, Colleague Heads of State and Government, Distinguished Delegates,**

In conclusion, the MDGs remain a very lofty Agenda in the history of our collective strides for global socio-economic development, though its full achievement has been thwarted by a multitude of factors. The year 2015 is a critical year for the United Nations as it marks its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which is also the target date for the MDGs,

the 10<sup>th</sup> year since the world summit held in 2005, and we are expected to agree on a Post-2015 development framework. It is imperative that we follow a pragmatic approach with renewed vigour and commitment to providing for our people a future that guarantees justice, peace and security, accountable and democratic governance, a transparent and equitable distribution of wealth, a safe and sustainable environment, health and education for all. These are essential elements for setting the stage for the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda.”

Unquote:

I thank you for your attention.