



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

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Address

by

H. E. DR. ERNEST BAI KOROMA
President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

at the

Ebola Recovery Pledging Conference

New York, 10th July 2015

Check Against Delivery

Let me start by applauding the Secretary General for organizing this most important conference. I also congratulate my colleague and sister, Her Excellency Helen Johnson-Sirleaf for the apt presentation of our Mano River Recovery Plan. My brother and Colleague, His Excellency Alpha Konde and I fully endorse her presentation, and we seek the support of the world to move it forward. With your very laudable support, and the heroism of thousands of Ebola Response Workers, we have pinned down the virus to a few neighborhoods in our countries. But that Ebola is still in a few areas means we are not Ebola free, it means the Mano River Union is not Ebola free, it means the world is not Ebola free.

The battle now is to get the few cases down to zero, and getting our counties and the whole world to stay at zero. This is the most difficult battle of all. It involves building the resilience to stay at zero, it involves rebuilding our health sectors, caring for the survivor, and supporting the orphans and the widows brought unto that very vulnerable position by the virus. It involves getting kids back to schools that remain safe, and shoring up the private sector as a means of rebuilding livelihoods and putting the countries back on the trajectory of growth and promise that were very visible before the virus struck.

Ebola is the deadliest of the zoonotic transmissions that are increasingly threatening humanity all over the globe. Humanity has the knowledge to combat this virus; humanity has the resources to shore up the resilience of the countries that this virus is keen on using as staging point for its assault on all humanity. We are here because we believe the leaders of humanity gathered here today are very committed to making the world Ebola free; we were witnesses unto your mobilization of resources and skills at the heat of the battle in August, September and November 2014.

But we also know that humanity sometimes displays short attention spans and may want to move on to other issues because the threat from Ebola seems over. No, no and no. The threat is never over until we rebuild the health sectors Ebola demolished; until we rebuild livelihoods in agriculture that it compromised, until we shore up government revenues it dried up; and until we breathe life again unto the private sector it has suffocated. We are here because we believe that with your dedication to making the world Ebola free, the funding and other resources to do this are within reach; and you will support our region and countries secure and deploy those resources in optimal, transparent and accountable ways.

The experts tell us that Ebola is a stubborn enemy that usually stages comebacks. Support for our recovery programme will prevent this comeback, and give all of us the skills, expertise and experience to tackle deadly zoonotic transmissions wherever they threaten humanity.

We have learned many lessons from the outbreak. The lessons inform our national and regional recovery plans. These are plans put together with the support of many of the experts the world deployed to help us fight back Ebola and build resilient

systems to combat future outbreak. The plans in essence are global plans for combating the virus in the Mano River Union, and they require global support to make them work.

We are committed to making the plans work because making them work has the urgency of a life and death situation for over twenty million people in our countries; it is a matter of life and death for the billions more that our globalized world has put within arms reach of these twenty million people. This is a battle for all of us. We should not relent; securing final victory against this evil virus requires meeting the goals of this conference: mobilizing and deploying support for the regional and national recovery plans of the three most affected countries.

I thank you all for your attention.