



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY
DR JULIUS MAADA BIO PRESIDENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ON
THE GROUND-BREAKING CEREMONY OF
THE BEACON ENERGY GENERATION
PROJECT, KISSY, FREETOWN, SIERRA
LEONE - TUESDAY 18TH JUNE 2024**

- **Mr/Madam Chairperson**
- **Ministers of Government**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament**
- **Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corp**
- **Development Partners**
- **The Private Sector**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Today, we gather here to celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony of a transformative project – Sierra Leone’s first large utility-scale Independent Power Project (IPP).

2. The development and upgrade of the Power Plant infrastructure of the Freetown-based Western Area Power Generation Project will promote reliable access to electricity across Sierra Leone.

3. This transformative Power Generation Project is a testament to our country’s vision for a **sustainable and cleaner energy sector that ensures universal access to modern, affordable and reliable energy services by 2035.**

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

4. **Energy is the lifeblood of any modern society.** It powers our homes, fuels our industries, and drives our country’s economic development and social progress. **WITHOUT ENERGY, WE CAN DO NOTHING.**

5. However, for far too long, Sierra Leone has faced significant challenges in meeting its energy needs. We continue to face inadequate access to affordable and reliable modern energy services.

6. Today, a new dawn is upon us as we take a decisive step to change that narrative. We are here to lay the foundation for a

Power Generation Project that will provide our nation with reliable, affordable, cleaner and sustainable energy.

7. The **“BEACON ENERGY GENERATION PROJECT”** is not just a project. It is a **transformative force, a beacon of hope, and a symbol of our unwavering commitment to developing our energy sector in a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable manner.**

8. This Project heralds a new era of energy independence and prosperity for Sierra Leone, inspiring hope and excitement for a brighter future.

9. The **148.5MW Power Purchase Agreement** for the **Western Area Power Generation Project**, signed by my Cabinet in November 2023 and ratified by the Sierra Leone Parliament, is to **construct and commission a 22-year Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)/Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Plant.**

10. Once completed in 36 months, the Project will **play a crucial role in meeting Sierra Leone’s energy needs**, a significant step towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

11. The Plant's power is projected to **benefit approximately 900,000 additional consumers**, providing them with reliable and affordable energy.

12. In addition, the abundant electricity generated and transmitted to the entire Western Area will not only meet our energy needs but also catalyse economic growth, promising a brighter future and improved quality of life for our citizens.

13. This Project will harness the power of our natural resources, leveraging advanced technology and sustainable practices to

ensure that we meet our current energy demands without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

14. The Project is not just about power generation. It's about our people and our economy. It will create a multitude of jobs, with a significant focus on our youth, stimulate local economies, and provide a stable energy supply that will attract domestic and international investments, thereby igniting industrial growth and prosperity.

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

15. This Project demonstrates our Government's commitment and readiness to continue to attract sustainable foreign investments in large infrastructure projects with long-term commitments.

16. By tapping into innovative energy funding approaches and pooling various forms of financing, including development, private, and external resources, we have been able to structure this important Project.

17. We thank the **United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC)** for providing the majority of the Project debt, a testament to our continued partnership with the United States Government.

18. We also welcome and thank the **ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)** for their financial support on this Project, which further strengthens our regional partnerships.

19. I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to the Project Sponsors and Industry Leaders, **Milele Energy** and **TCQ Power Limited**, the local project company **CECA (SL) Ltd**, our **Partners**, and the **Stakeholders for their invaluable contributions to this project.**

20. Your collaborative efforts, dedication, and expertise have been instrumental in bringing us to this momentous day.

21. Your continued support and involvement will be crucial as we move forward with the **BEACON ENERGY GENERATION PROJECT**.

22. This Project exemplifies what we can achieve when we work together towards a common goal.

DISTINGUISHED PARTNERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

23. Our Government's second-term mandate will be driven by the commitments made in our **Medium-Term National Development Plan** for the **period 2024-2030**, with the "**Big Five Game Changers**" priority areas to build a resilient economy and improve the quality of lives of all Sierra Leoneans.

24. My government prioritises the development of the energy sector to spur sustainable economic transformation in our country.

25. We aim to provide our people and productive sectors with access to modern, affordable, and reliable energy infrastructure and services.

26. While past and ongoing reforms have generated some encouraging results, they have not significantly improved access to energy services.

27. To enhance efficiency and attract private investment like this **ENERGY GENERATION PROJECT**, my Government will augment its efforts to strengthen and accelerate the energy sector governance and regulatory reforms.

28. We are committed to sustainable and cleaner energy, and this Project is a significant step in that direction.

29. We will continue to create and maintain the enabling environment by promoting sound fiscal and legal policies and improved public- 16 16 sector performance and accountability especially in the energy sector.

30. As we race to provide our people with **“affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” by 2030** in alignment with the **United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal 7 (SDG7)**, we are also adapting to the increasing impact of **Climate Change** on our communities.

31. The energy challenge is how to balance the need to meet the increasing demand for affordable and secure energy with the need to tackle Climate Change.

32. Almost a year ago, my Government launched the **National Dialogue on Energy Transition** to embrace cleaner energy sources while ensuring reliability.

33. In line with our global commitments to **Climate Change** actions, Sierra Leone stands ready to build a greener and more sustainable energy future.

34. As a Government, we will gradually increase the sustainable use of renewable energy sources where the potential exists, foster energy efficiency and adopt cleaner technologies.

35. Hence, this Project strongly aligns with our priorities and contributes significantly to our energy transition strategy and lasting transformation.

36. I reiterate our Government’s unwavering commitment to this Project. It is a testament to our dedication to advancing Sierra

Leone's energy sector and our firm belief in the transformative power of sustainable development.

37. We will continue to support investments in projects that enhance our energy infrastructure, promote sustainable development, and improve the lives of our citizens.

DISTINGUISHED PARTNERS AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT,

38. In closing, let me use this opportunity to advocate for an effective Human Resources policy that prioritises employing Sierra Leoneans from entry level to management positions with a strong focus on training and transferring knowledge to our nationals throughout the project cycle — from the construction to the operations phase.

39. I also encourage the Management to strongly prioritise employing our youth and make deliberate efforts to employ our competent women in your workforce.

40. I also encourage International Best Practices for your Environment and Corporate Social Responsibility, especially to the surrounding communities.

41. **TO THE GREAT PEOPLE OF OUR NATION**, this Project is for all of us. We must embrace the investors and work diligently with them as partners.

42. Let us embrace the opportunities this Project presents and work together to ensure that everyone benefits.

43. By the grace of the Almighty God, this is the beginning of many transformative investments, especially in the energy sector.

44. As we embark on this journey, let us remain united in our efforts to build a better, more prosperous Sierra Leone.

45. Today's groundbreaking ceremony marks a new chapter in our nation's energy sector — one filled with promise, potential, and progress.

46. Together, we are not just breaking ground. We are laying the foundation for a brighter, better tomorrow.

47. **DISTINGUISHED PARTNERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**, it gives me the greatest pleasure to launch the groundbreaking of the **BEACON ENERGY GENERATION PROJECT**.

48. Together, **LET US Light UP and POWER SIERRA LEONE!**

49. Thank you, and may God bless Sierra Leone.