



**Address by His Excellency
Julius Maada Bio
on the Occasion of the
Inauguration of the Court of the
University of Sierra Leone, 2018**

The Master of Ceremonies

The Chief Minister

The Minister of Technical & Higher Education

Your worship, the Mayor of the Municipality of Freetown

The Pro-Chancellor

The Acting Vice-Chancellor & Principal

The Chairman, Conference of Vice-Chancellors & Principals

The Deputy Vice-Chancellors FBC, IPAM & COMAHS

Members of the Academic & Administrative Staff of the University

Members of the Diplomatic & Consular Corps

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to be here this morning to inaugurate the new court of the University of Sierra Leone. This new court which membership is drawn from various sectors of the country and from different disciplinary backgrounds is one that I believe has all what it takes to surmount the challenges confronting higher education in our country.

The inauguration of this court comes at a time when a new administration of the University of Sierra Leone under the leadership of the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education leads the process of

reclaiming its position among centres of excellence not only in Africa but in the world at large.

The current Minister of Technical & Higher Education who served this University in the capacity of Vice-Chancellor & Principal from 2005-2009 with commitment and dedication is well placed to enable the university to achieve this noble goal. I have no doubt that the members of this court have been carefully chosen to support this process.

I am convinced that the new court will work assiduously with the current University Administration to ensure that the goals and benchmarks set by the University will be achieved. I note with concern that for a long time the educational system in the entire country from primary through secondary to tertiary level has suffered serious setbacks in terms of capacity and quality of its products. That is the reason why quality education became one of my flagship programmes during my campaign and upon assuming office as President of Sierra Leone.

I am also aware that our educational system is fraught with a lot of challenges. My Government is however determined to overcome these challenges and with your help and good will, we shall succeed in this endeavour.

Apart from funding which my Government is presently addressing, one challenge that has become a serious cause for concern for the University and the country is the unfortunate practice of cultism by students in our universities. Freedom of Association is a fundamental human right enshrined in our constitution which we all recognize at all times. But when students, who are expected to demonstrate high ethical standards, hide behind the cloak of fraternities and sororities and engage in cruel and sometimes fatal practices against their colleagues as a rite of passage to membership of these so-called clubs, it becomes worrisome.

The university should not become a sanctuary for cultism or secret societies. This is unacceptable and my Government will not tolerate anymore. I am very much encouraged by the new administration's avowed determination to curb cultism and other anti-social behaviors in the university by taking necessary disciplinary measures.

The University also has the responsibility to ensure that its programmes are geared towards addressing the specific needs of our society, with the goal of producing marketable graduates. This is because higher education generates broader economic growth as well as individual success.

To achieve all of these, the University needs a vibrant and formidable Court. The Court is the highest decision-making body as provided for in the Universities Act, 2005. It has the authority to formulate and introduce new policy guidelines to govern the operations of the University within the framework of the law. This goes to show the powers you have as a body to promote the educational aspirations of the university and by extension the country. Your appointment as members to the university court was therefore carefully done in recognition of your track records and expertise in your various disciplines.

The expectations of the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, the University Family and the general public are therefore very high. By appointing you as members of this court, much responsibility has been given to you and correspondingly, much is desired of and expected of you. It is therefore my fervent hope that you will deliver on the mandate of your appointments as members of this noble body.

At this point, I am requesting you to please stand up. ***By the powers vested in me as Chancellor of the University of Sierra Leone, I confirm your appointments as members of the Court of the University of Sierra Leone from 2018 to 2023.***

I wish you all the very best in your new appointments.