

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
AT THE GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM 2023**

Mr. High Commissioner,

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

My delegation appreciates the High Commissioner for convening this important session bringing together stakeholders and to remind the global community of our collective responsibility to maintain the safety and integrity of people living with and among us as refugees. Our world today is becoming less safe because of conflicts and instabilities coupled with the threat we face from the climate crisis. These and many other societal factors are pushing people, families, and whole communities out of their homes, and more often now than ever before, forcefully.

The question remains, how do we as individual states react to this unfortunate trend.

Sierra Leone has transitioned from itself being a refuge source country with over half of its population leaving for other countries between 1991 and 2000, to becoming a host country for refugees. This was made possible not only by the peace the Sierra Leone enjoys, but also the enabling environment created by the political will of the Government of Sierra Leone. With the support of our bilateral partners and international organizations, we hosted a total of 60, 000 refugees from the conflicts in the sub-region, and successfully processed their return home with start-up kit assistance, or seamless integration into our communities as contributors to national development.

Through the National Commission for Social Action (NacSA), Sierra Leone in collaboration with the UNHCR, the ECOWAS Commission, and other international organizations successfully implemented the physical and legal reforms for the protection of refugees and asylum seekers. The ongoing “Tenki Salone” project aims to compensate refugee host communities with socio-economic and infrastructure developments. NaCSA continues to promote the efforts of the

Government to end statelessness and to ensure the regularization of the status of all persons of nationalities other than Sierra Leoneans.

To this end, we pledge to:

1: Implement the adopted National Action Plan on Statelessness to ensure that by 2026 80% of persons identified at risk of becoming stateless persons are regularized.

2: Foster increased access to social rights through access to documentation and inclusion into the Productive Social Safety-Nets and Youth Employment Project to at least 1,500 persons by 2026

3: Mobilize millions of dollars to implement 93 socio-economic infrastructure projects identified in 19 refugee host communities for the full implementation of “Tenki Salon” project by 2024-2026 to foster a sustainable inclusion of refugees in host communities in the South-eastern and North-western Regions

4: Secure sustainable access to land in order to reinforce social inclusion for 3500 forcibly displaced in protracted situation by 2025/26

In conclusion, Mr. High Commissioner

Sierra Leone, therefore calls on the UNHCR, ECOWAS and other international organizations to support the Government of Sierra Leone to access funds from other donor agencies in order to ensure the full implementation of the “Tenki Salon” project and other pledges tendered for a sustainable phase-out of the remaining caseload of refugees with an effective and efficient road map to compensate host community based programmes which is part of the five Game Changers of His Excellency the President, Dr. Julius Maada Bio’s immediate priorities.

Thank you.