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(Freetown, Sierra Leone – Friday, February 22, 2013) Sierra Leonean President, His Excellency Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma, has pledged to work harder to meet the expectations of his compatriots, but he noted that it will require the collective effort of both the Government and the people to do more.

“This is what the Agenda for Prosperity is all about; all of us doing more to bring home the fruits of the achievements made during the Agenda for Change,” he emphasized, adding, “Now is the time to do more; now is the time to move on to the Agenda for Prosperity.” President Koroma’s electoral campaign was based on the theme of “Transformation for National Prosperity.” He promised to revamp the country’s mining sector to enhance the economic and social well-being of the people.

According to an Executive Mansion release, the Sierra Leonean leader made the statement Friday, February 22, when he delivered his Inaugural Address at the country’s open-air National Stadium attended by approximately 50,000 supporters, Sierra Leoneans and visiting guests.

President Koroma called for a radical change from the way his country and its people have been used to doing things, and urged them to be passionately patriotic. “Put country before self, work hard and honestly, and be boldly persistent in pushing forward our democratic and development aspirations,” he advised. He added that Sierra Leoneans should strive to live in harmony, endeavor to be more robust in articulating the good things about the country, and building on the national heritage.

He said that for too long indiscipline and lawlessness have gained ascendancy in all facets of the society. It was necessary to restore the ideals that made Sierra Leone a center of excellence. President Koroma made it emphatically clear that Sierra Leoneans must not allow the corrupt and the unjust to hold the nation to ransom. “Let truth and honesty inform the choices we make so that our actions will promote traditional standards of decency and uprightness that can only spread positive ripples throughout society,” he stressed.

Sierra Leone being a youthful nation, the mainstay of the country’s hopes, President Koroma dedicated his second term to the youths of the nation. “With the youth I will do more; with the youth, we will all do more; with the youth, we will set forth on a worthy journey of renewal, productivity, creativity and success,” he said, though warning that this success requires discipline.

He called on the youth to continue to dedicate themselves to the sustenance of democracy and the betterment of Sierra Leone, saying, “We have a mission to accomplish, a country to rebuild and a future to secure. We can only do this through a disciplined approach, through respect for the laws and fidelity to our heritage of learning and freedom.”



On foreign relations, President Koroma said that his government remains committed to maintaining good relations with global institutions and regional bodies to promote democracy, justice and fair trade in global interactions, including the Mano River Union, ECOWAS, the African Union and the United Nations, among others. He said his country is acting for peace, democracy and development in Africa, and has taken a firm stance against intolerance, terrorism and violence.

Earlier in the program, Liberia's President, Madam Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, on behalf of the Government and people of Liberia, and in her own name, delivered a goodwill message congratulating President Koroma's victory and Sierra Leone's peaceful electoral process.

She stated that President Koroma's inauguration marked a significant milestone in the collective stride to promote and sustain democracy and good governance in the African continent, and in particular the Mano River Union Basin – a region whose socio-economic and democratic progress was significantly undermined by conflicts. "Today we now make progress, even as we face the common and difficult challenges associated with the transition from conflict and fragility to economic and political transformation," President Sirleaf pointed out. The Liberian President observed that the culture of democracy and political tolerance, once a scarce commodity in the Mano River Basin, and the African continent, is now in abundant supply in the region and all across the continent – a phenomenon that is truly a source of pride and hope for the future.

She stressed that as the sub-region turns the corner from war to peace and consolidated democracy, its members must increasingly use their vast natural resources to diversify their economies and add value to primary commodities, thereby strengthening the process of industrialization. "We must use our progress as a base for adopting an integral approach to addressing fragility, thereby accelerating development within the sub-region," President Sirleaf urged.

As current Chair of the Mano River Union, the Liberian President said she is pleased that these countries are placing emphasis on the promotion of intra-trade and food security, which will be enhanced by their determined effort to implement cross-border infrastructure connectivity and other projects. "We therefore view your re-election as an opportunity for us to take even bigger and bolder steps on the road to regional reintegration," she said.

As part of the inaugural ceremony, a military marching band, dressed in black pants and red or blue shirts, with trumpeters and drummers, paraded the grounds of the National Stadium, entertaining thousands of Sierra Leoneans and visiting guests with old and familiar popular tunes.

Several hundred members of various regiments of the Sierra Leonean Armed Forces marched past and saluted their Commander-in-Chief. Others, including the Boys Scouts, Girls Guide, students, market women groups, partisans of the All People's Congress (APC), dressed in red and white, among others, paid respect to President Koroma during the ceremony.

As part of the ceremony, the Caucus of Paramount Chiefs in Parliament performed the ritual of the pouring of libation for the President and the nation.

This is President Koroma's second and final inauguration, as prescribed by Sierra Leone's Constitution. On November 23, 2012, Sierra Leone's National Electoral Commission (NEC) announced that Dr. Koroma had been re-elected, with 58.7 percent of the votes.

Dr. Koroma was first elected President in 2007, although he contested in the 2002 presidential elections, and served as the leader of the parliamentary opposition from 2002 to 2007.

Participating in the inaugural ceremony were outgoing government officials, including former President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who handed over the baton of the Office of the President to Dr. Koroma, amid cheers from spectators.

President Sirleaf and delegation returned home Friday evening.

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