



**H.E President Julius Maada Bio addressing stakeholders at the 4<sup>th</sup> National WASH Conference**

The President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, Retired Brigadier Julius Maada Bio has told stakeholders in the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) sector that his Government is determined to put an end to what he described as a **“Tentative, unplanned and disorganized WASH intervention”** in the country. He made this statement while delivering his keynote address at the 4<sup>th</sup> National WASH Conference held at the Bintumani Hotel in Freetown on the theme **“New Direction for Sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Services in Sierra Leone.”** The Conference which took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018 was organized by the Ministry of Water Resources in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and sanitation with support from the Millennium Challenge coordinating Unit and other development partners.

The President said his Government has embarked on a purposeful; well-planned programme that aims to improve sustainable access to Water, Sanitation, Hygiene behaviours that will lead to measurable and improved health outcomes with an emphasis on sustainable access to water and improved sanitation to meet the

Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Talking about efforts in bringing about reforms in the sector, the President said his Government is working on a National Water Act and other legislations that will streamline the WASH sector and provide the enabling environment for inter-ministerial and inter-agency collaboration.

The president noted that human capital development which is a priority of his New Direction Government cannot be achieved without improved public health outcomes for all Sierra Leoneans by increasing their access to safe water and sanitation and promoting health behaviors that will minimize the incidents of death in the communities.

Emphasizing the need to building on the local technical capacity in the WASH Sector, the President said:

*“Capacity building is central to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sierra Leone recognizes the external technical assistance provided by donor partners over the years, it is now time to wean ourselves from perpetual dependence on foreign and donor technical assistance”*

In his address, the Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Alpha Tejan Wurrie said the WASH annual review conference is critical to the growth of Sierra Leone and urged all stakeholders to take actions that will change the narrative of the sector. He said the health sector is currently in a bad shape with challenges ranging from lack of pipe borne water in most hospitals and health centers to malnutrition among children leading to early death.

The Minister of Water Resources, Dr. Jonathan Tengbeh said the New Direction Government is determined to increase access to safe drinking water for all Sierra Leoneans. The Minister informed stakeholders that his Ministry will work in collaboration with other MDAs to review the existing WASH Policy which he said does not resonate with the aspirations of the new administration and the agenda for climate change.

Country Director of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Matthew Langhenry

congratulated the President, his Government and the people of Sierra Leone for passing the Control of Corruption indicator on the recently released MCC FY2019 Scorecard. He said the current partnership between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Government of the United States of America on the implementation of a \$44.4 million Threshold Program will contribute to the overall improvement and performance of the water sector. He said the introduction of an innovative Results-based Financing (RBF) scheme by the Sierra Leone Threshold Program is a move aimed at incentivizing performance of targeted utilities like Guma Valley Water Company and hoped that the Government and other donor partners will support the RBF beyond the Threshold Program.

The two days conference was an opportunity for stakeholders in the WASH sector to take stock of the current status of water and sanitation service delivery and agree on next steps. This means identifying the challenges and opportunities that exist to improve peoples' access to safe, reliable, affordable and sustainable water and sanitation services.