

President Koroma's Sea View Estate Speech
- Wednesday 11 June 2008.

SPEECH BY H.E. THE PRESIDENT, DR. ERNEST BAI KOROMA AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SEA VIEW ESTATE AT GODERICH

Mr. Chairman,
Hon. Vice President,
Your Excellencies members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Cabinet Ministers and members of Parliament,
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

I wish to express my pleasure at the opening of yet another Housing Initiative undertaken by the partnership between Regimanuel Gray Limited, a private company based in Ghana and the National Social Security and Insurance Trust (NASSIT). Quite recently, I was honoured to turn the sod at the Launching of NASSIT's Affordable Housing Pilot Project at Grafton through this same partnership. I stated then that my vision for the Western Area and the rest of the country was the development of "New Cities" that would be provided with adequate supplies of electricity and water as well as facilities for sewage, waste management, telecommunications and transportation services. Real estate development in the country should be based on international best practice. Specific areas were to be set aside for the development of commercial and recreational activities as well as ensuring the efficient management of the environment for good health and proper sanitation.

The Sea View Estate, which we are about to commission, marks a watershed in the recent history of real estate development in Sierra Leone. To my mind, this landmark development serves several purposes. First, this development will provide housing for certain segments of the market whose requirements are captured in the design and development features of this estate. Secondly, it will send a symbolic message that residential estate development can be done in Sierra Leone according to international standards. Thirdly, the presence of a foreign private interest in this development sends a strong message to all well-meaning investors that Sierra Leone is an investment destination. But above all, the commissioning of this estate is the beginning of the realization of my vision of how the development of human settlements should be structured in this country.

The development of this piece of land in Goderich, is a demonstration of my vision for all subsequent developments that will take place along the Freetown Peninsula Road, from Waterloo to Hamilton. Residential estates may not need to be fenced and gated; but they must have proper roads; they must have access to water supply and basic utilities like electricity, transport and communication and they must be properly managed to maintain the environmental well-being of the land and its inhabitants. My Government will ensure that this shall be the case in the foreseeable future.

Real estate and other forms of infrastructure development are of high priority to my Government and we will give all the necessary support to all those involved in this sector.

I am aware that in this estate for example, there is a threat to security of the land, buildings, machinery and equipment from neighbouring encroachers who are mining the beach sand in an uncontrolled and unregulated manner. The Chairman, NASSIT Board of Trustees mentioned that despite several efforts by the company and NASSIT to get them relocated, including financial compensation, they have not succeeded. This has continually exposed the project's assets to security risks. Such actions cannot continue if this country is to attract and maintain investments.

In this regard, the Ministry of Lands and the Environment will be advised to ensure that the issue of sand miners currently encroaching in lands belonging to this project be addressed soon. Law enforcement agencies will be directed to take full permissible action to follow through on this matter.

Such will be the action for all other cases of this nature. We must make this country a place where private property is secure and where there is respect for law and order.

Mr. Chairman, Sierra Leone is blessed with wonderful landscapes, beaches, and wildlife. As a nation, we should take advantage of these resources and make this country not only a tourist destination, but also an investment destination. My government is committed to providing the necessary incentives to make our country financially more attractive for international real estate investors.

In conclusion Mr. Chairman, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I will use this occasion to reassure everyone here that I am more than ever before, committed to my message and promise of bringing change to the people of this country. The message and promise of change is being translated to a programme of change. Change that will affect the way Government delivers services to the people; change that will affect the way the public sector manages public resources and administers policies and regulations; change that will affect the way public servants account for their time in positions of authority and responsibility; change that will affect how Government ensures that the citizens of this country perform their civic responsibilities and above all, change that will ultimately lift more and more Sierra Leoneans out of poverty into better living conditions.

To this I pledge myself and my Government. By God's grace and with the cooperation of all stakeholders, a few years from today, there will be signs of hope for the future of this country; and hopefully 5- 10 years from today, this country would have risen from the bottom to the middle of the human development ladder.

It is now my pleasure and honour to commission the Sea View Estate, Goderich.

Thank you for your attention.