

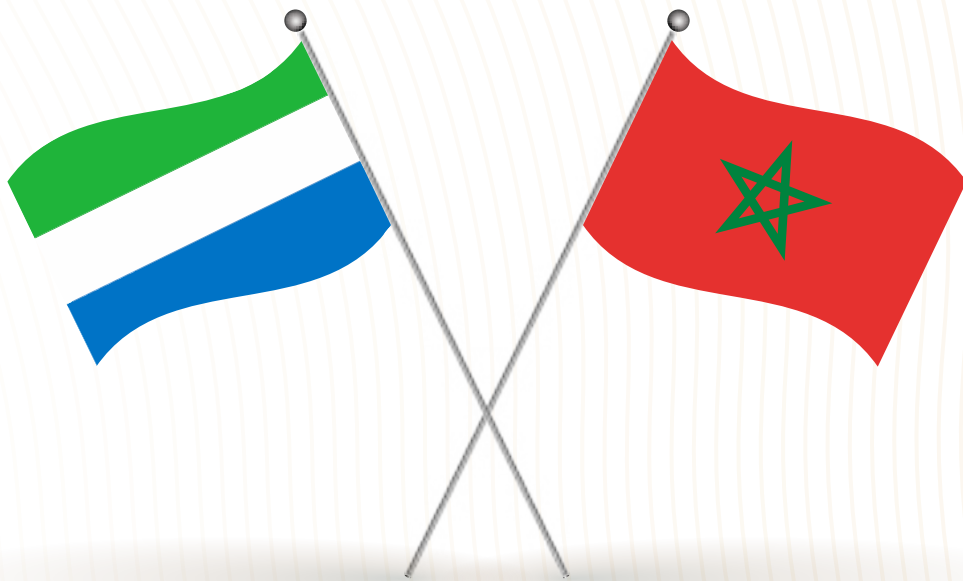


*Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
African Cooperation
and Moroccan Expatriates*



JOINT COMMUNIQUE

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO - REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE



Dakhla, 28 April 2023

1. In furtherance of their mutual desire to strengthen cooperation and deepen their close ties of friendship, cooperation and mutual solidarity, the Governments of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Sierra Leone held the Third Session of the Joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC) between Morocco and Sierra Leone in Dakhla, Morocco on 28 April 2023.
2. The Joint Commission of Cooperation was convened in accordance with the Agreement on the Establishment of the Joint Commission of Cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Sierra Leone, which was signed on 16th July 2003.
3. The Moroccan delegation was led by H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates and the Sierra Leonean delegation was led by H.E. Professor David J. Francis, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Meeting was attended by representatives of both sides.
4. Both co-chairs highlighted the strong and longstanding relations of fraternity and solidarity that bind the two countries, and praised the excellent bonds of friendship and mutual respect existing between their Heads of State, His Majesty Mohammed VI, King of Morocco and His Excellency Dr. Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone.
5. H.E. Nasser Bourita hailed the remarkable development experienced by the Republic of Sierra Leone in recent years under the enlightened leadership of President Julius Maada Bio and reaffirmed the commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to contribute to the efforts being deployed by the Government of Sierra Leone to further stimulate the economic and human development of the country.
6. For his part, H.E. Professor David J. Francis welcomed the praiseworthy contribution of the Kingdom of Morocco to the promotion of cohesion, peace and prosperity of the sub-region since the creation of the Mano River Union, paying homage to the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI and His far-sighted Vision aimed at consolidating South-South cooperation and solidarity throughout the African continent.
7. Considerable attention was devoted to the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline, that will connect Nigerian gas to every coastal country in West Africa, up to the Mediterranean shore.
8. They expressed confidence that this large-scale energy project will immensely boost the region's economic integration, and benefit all the nations involved by unlocking their industrial potential and curbing their energy deficit. On this occasion, H.E. Professor David J. Francis renewed Sierra Leone's active support in achieving the targets and fast-tracking the implementation of this transformative initiative.
9. At the bilateral level, they expressed satisfaction at the progress made in various areas of cooperation since the last session of the Mixed Commission for the Joint Cooperation held in 2008, and in the implementation of the ambitious Roadmap of Cooperation between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Sierra Leone for the period 2022-2024.

10. Both sides expressed their desire to steer bilateral relations towards a future of shared prosperity and pledged to strengthen bilateral cooperation in several sectors deemed priorities by the Sierra Leonean side, including agriculture, fertilizers, investment, water and tourism.
11. The Parties noted with satisfaction that despite the Covid-19 pandemic, trade between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Sierra Leone almost doubled between 2019 and 2021. They however shared the opinion that bilateral trade does not reflect the potential of their countries, and decided to take the necessary steps to expand the parameters of their economic and investment cooperation. To this end, they agreed to encourage their business communities and investors to fully explore the possibilities offered by their growing markets.
12. With regard to the question of the Moroccan Sahara, the Sierra Leonean side restated the firm and constant support of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco and the Moroccanness of its Sahara.
13. H.E. Professor David J. Francis praised the credibility and primacy of the Moroccan Autonomy Initiative as the only basis for resolving this issue, while reiterating the full support of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the role played by the United Nations as an exclusive and consensual framework to achieve a lasting solution to this regional dispute, and the African Union Decision 693 adopted by the 31st Summit held in July 2018, officially supporting the UN process in this regard.
14. In the same vein, the Sierra Leonean Foreign Minister welcomed the dynamics of international recognition of the territorial unity and integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco, to which the Republic of Sierra Leone has voluntarily adhered by the opening of a Consulate General in Dakhla, in August 2021.
15. For his part, H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita welcomed the momentum of support and mutual consultations characterizing relations between the two brotherly countries at the level of regional and international bodies and agreed with his Sierra Leonean counterpart to continue to defend their respective fundamental interests.
16. On peace and security issues, both Ministers noted with concern the persistence of many hotbeds of tension and terrorism, which remain the most important sources of instability in the Continent. They reaffirmed their firm resolve to work together with relevant parties to fight this scourge in an effective manner, and to facilitate the resolution of disputes in Africa through dialogue, and in accordance with international law.
17. The two sides agreed to mutually support, as appropriate, the Moroccan and Sierra Leonean bids at the level of regional and international cooperation mechanisms. H.E. Professor David J. Francis extended Sierra Leone's strong support for Morocco's candidature for a non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the term 2028-2029. H.E. Mr. Nasser Bourita, for his part, reiterated Morocco's support for the candidature of Sierra Leone to serve on the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member for the year 2024-2025.
18. The two Parties expressed their satisfaction with the results of the Third Session of the Joint Commission for Moroccan-Sierra Leonean Cooperation, which took place

in a warm and constructive atmosphere, reflecting the close ties of friendship and solidarity between the two countries.

19. Desirous to further strengthen and elevate the status of bilateral relations between the two countries, the two Ministers welcomed the signing of the thirteen legal instruments annexed.
20. At the conclusion of the Third Session of the Joint Commission of Cooperation, H.E. Professor David J. Francis expressed sincere thanks for the warm welcome and the friendly hospitality, which he and his delegation had enjoyed during their stay in Morocco.
21. Both sides have agreed that the Fourth Session of the JCC between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Sierra Leone will be held in Sierra Leone, the dates of which will be mutually agreed through diplomatic channel.