NJALA UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS

By

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Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Njala University

at the

2025 Congregation Ceremony

for the Conferment of Higher Degrees, Awards of Postgraduate Diplomas

Theme: Human Capital Development (HCD) in Health Equity and Digital Revolution in Sierra Leone

Venue: Forecourt of the Administrative Building, Njala Campus, Njala.

Date: Saturday 20th December 2025

Salutations

- Chancellor and Chairman of Court
- His Excellency the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Sierra Leone, and Visitor of Njala University
- Hon Vice President of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- Hon Chief Minister of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- Minister of Technical and Higher Education
- Other Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Government here present
- Members of the Njala University Court
- Vice-Chancellors and Principals of USL, EBKUST, ETU-SL, MMTU and KUST
- Vice- Chancellors and Principals of Private Universities and other Tertiary Institutions
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors of Njala University and other Universities present here
- Excellences, Members of the Diplomatic & Consular Corps
- Our Revered Paramount Chiefs and other Traditional Rulers
- Your Worships the Mayors of the cities of Bo, Bonthe, Makeni, Freetown, and Kenema.
- Hon. Members of Parliament
- The Chairpersons and Members of the Moyamba, Bo, Pujehun and Bonthe District Councils
- Representatives of International Organizations and Agencies
- Our Development Partners
- Alumni of Njala University
- Representatives of Civil Society Organizations
- All Staff and Students of Njala University
- All citizens of the Republic of Sierra Leone present here and all of you following this event remotely or otherwise
- Members of the Fourth Estate
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

1. We are most delighted as members of the Njala University Family to welcome you all to join us this morning for our Fifth Postgraduate Congregation ceremony held separately from the Undergraduate Ceremony for the conferment of Higher Degrees and Awards of Postgraduate Diplomas.

2. Mr. Chancellor, Sir, let me take this opportunity to heartily welcome graduands, parents, guardians and sponsors, friends, and the well-wishers; and for us as a university, and, indeed, for Sierra Leone as a nation for joining us today to celebrate these achievements. Thank you all for being here today.

3. Mr. Chancellor, Sir, I am pleased to announce that today, we shall be witnessing the award of **a total of 1,160 Postgraduate Degrees (of which 792 are Males and 368 are Females).** Disaggregating the data, there are **15 PhDs (of which 12 are Males and 3 Females), 3 MPhils; 1,117 Masters (of which 758 are Males and 362 are Females)**; and **25** Postgraduate Diplomas **(of which 19 are Males and 6 are Females)**. **Congratulations! Let us give ourselves a round of applause.** Let me also most sincerely thank the members of the Senate and Court, the Administrative and Academic staff and continuing students here present for their invaluable guidance and support for these achievements.

4. Madam Minister, Chancellor, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to disclose to the entire University's Administration and the general public, once more the external audit opinions on the audited financial statements over the years (including FY2024 received couple of days ago) by the Auditor General of Sierra Leone that have been favourable in all aspects. The accounts have been presented fairly in compliance with local and foreign financial, audit and procurement laws that guide their preparation and presentation. This is a way of fostering accountability, transparency and integrity in prudence and stringent financial management in a very tight fiscal space, the University operates in. We thank the court for their financial oversight functions in delivering another milestone in our financial prudence enhancement.

5. Today is a historic and deeply significant day for Njala University, and indeed a proud moment for the Republic of Sierra Leone. We gather here not only to celebrate academic success, but to reaffirm a national commitment - a commitment to education as the bedrock of equity, innovation, resilience, and sustainable development.

6. This Congregation ceremony marks the culmination of years of discipline, sacrifice, perseverance, and intellectual growth by our graduands. It also marks a renewal of Njala University’s mandate as a national institution - a mandate to serve the people of Sierra Leone by developing human capital,

advancing health equity, and driving digital transformation for inclusive national progress.

7. **Our theme - "NU Human Capital Development for Health Equity and Digital Revolution in Sierra Leone"** - is neither rhetorical nor aspirational language. It is a declaration of purpose. It reflects who we are as an institution, what we have deliberately pursued over the years, and what we must continue to do in fulfilment of our national responsibility.

8. Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Distinguished Guests, history teaches us a clear lesson: every nation that has transformed itself has done so by investing deliberately, strategically, and consistently in its people.

9. Natural resources alone do not guarantee prosperity. Infrastructure alone does not deliver equity. Technology alone does not produce development. People do. Skilled people. Ethical people. Innovative people. People who can think critically, adapt rapidly, and act responsibly.

10. Human capital is the engine of strong health systems, productive economies, resilient institutions, and inclusive societies. Where human capital is weak, inequality widens. Where human capital is strong, nations progress.

11. Njala University exists for this purpose. Our mission goes far beyond awarding certificates. We exist to develop leaders, train professionals, generate knowledge, and produce graduates capable of solving Sierra Leone's most pressing challenges.

12. Over the past three years, Njala University has undergone one of the most ambitious institutional transformations in its history. Guided by national priorities, regional needs, and global standards, the University has restructured and expanded its academic architecture to respond to the realities of a growing population, the Free Quality Education programme, and evolving labour-market demands.

13. Today, Njala University operates sixteen Schools, offering over one hundred undergraduate programmes, sixty-seven master's programmes, and more than twenty-five MPhil and PhD pathways, alongside professional diplomas, certificates, and distance education programmes. This expansion reflects a deliberate strategy to ensure that Sierra Leone has the skilled workforce

required in health, agriculture, education, science, technology, law, governance, and management.

14. This transformation sends a clear message: A university that does not evolve with society cannot serve society.

15. Mr. Chancellor Sir, health equity is one of the defining moral and development challenges of our time. It is not charity. Health equity is justice. It is the principle that a child born in a remote chiefdom deserves the same chance of survival as a child born near a tertiary hospital. It is the recognition that health outcomes are shaped not only by hospitals and medicines, but by education, environment, data, leadership, and systems.

16. Njala University has placed health equity at the Centre of its human capital agenda. One of our most significant achievements has been the establishment of the College of Medical Sciences, transforming the former School of Community Health Sciences into three integrated Schools - Medicine, Nursing, and Public Health.

17. The Pre-Medical Programme is fully accredited and operational, and the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBChB) curriculum has obtained partial approval from the TEC. The first cohort of MBChB students has already been posted to laboratories and Peripheral Health Units, strengthening their diagnostic competence and community exposure. Formal classes will commence in February 2026.

18. In parallel, Njala University has initiated the School of Veterinary Medicine, recognizing the critical importance of the One Health approach - the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health.

19. These initiatives produce professionals trained not only to treat disease, but to understand the social, environmental, and digital determinants of health.

20. Mr. Chancellor Sir, Distinguished Guests, health equity cannot be achieved in isolation from food security, livelihoods, and social stability. In alignment with the national Feed Salone initiative, Njala University has extended its impact beyond the classroom. Through community rice cultivation, adaptive crop breeding, youth farmer training, aquaculture, mushroom value-chain development, and agribusiness incubation, the University has translated academic expertise into national food security and youth employment.

21. This is human capital development in action - knowledge applied directly to the needs of society.

22. Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, on digital revolution, it is not a luxury for developing countries. It is a necessity. Digital technologies now determine how knowledge is accessed, how health threats are detected, how services are delivered, how institutions are governed, and how economies compete. But let us be clear: digital transformation without human capacity deepens inequality. Njala University therefore places people at the Centre of the digital revolution.

23. The University has expanded blended and online learning, launched its first fully online MBA programme, trained staff in Learning Management Systems, and deployed University Management Information Systems to improve governance and service delivery. A modern institutional digital repository is being developed to preserve and disseminate research outputs.

24. Looking ahead, Njala University is positioning itself as a national anchor institution for digital human capital development. We have one integrated vision: Human Capital Health Equity in Digital Revolution. These are not parallel agendas. They are a mission.

25. Dear Graduands, you are graduating at a defining moment in our nation's history. Carry the name of Njala University with pride. Use your education to strengthen institutions, uplift communities, and shape a future worthy of our collective hopes.

Conclusion

I extend heartfelt appreciation to our academic and professional staff, to parents and guardians, and to government and development partners for their continued trust and support.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Distinguished Guests, the future of Sierra Leone will not be built by chance. It will be built by educated minds, ethical leadership, and digitally empowered human capital.

Njala University is ready. Our Graduands are prepared. Our mission is clear.

May God bless our Graduands,
May God bless Njala University,
And may God bless the Republic of Sierra Leone.

THANK YOU ALL, GOD BLESS YOU, AND I WISH YOU A HAPPY CONGREGATION CEREMONY