NJALA UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS

By

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Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Njala University

at the

2025 Congregation Ceremony

for the Conferment of Degrees, and Awards of Diplomas and Certificates,

Theme: Purposeful Journey to Transforming Njala University Complimentary with the Big Five Changers of the Government of Sierra Leone

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

Date: Friday 19th 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

We are most delighted as members of the Njala University Family to welcome you all to join us this morning for our 17th Congregation ceremony this year, for the conferment of Diplomas and Certificates.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, this celebration is another milestone in annals of our history - for the graduands, their families, friends, and the well-wishers, for us as a university, and, indeed, for Sierra Leone as a nation. Let me take this opportunity to welcome, and offer a special thank you to the parents, guardians and sponsors who have joined us today to celebrate these achievements. Thank you all for being here today.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, I am pleased to announce that today, we shall be witnessing the award of a total of **2,189** Undergraduate **Degrees** of which **1,181** are males and **1,008 are** females, and a total of **992 Diplomas and Certificates** of which **448** are males and **544** are females**.** This gives a grand total of **3,181 Graduands,** of which **1, 629** are **Males** and **1, 552** are **Females** (see Annex 1 for a Matrix of the respective Schools)**. Congratulations. Let us give ourselves a round of applause.** We are hopeful that these students will be able to use the professional skills acquired, continue to learn to improve themselves and diligently serve their communities and the country as a whole. Let me also most sincerely thank the members of the Senate and Court, as well as the Administrative and Academic staff for their continued guidance and support for these achievements.

Mr. Chairman Sir, distinguished Court Members, Ministers present and other Diplomatic Consular Corps, colleagues, students, and partners; it is with profound gratitude and a deep sense of responsibility to present this congregation address on the **Theme: Njala University Purposeful Journey to Sierra Leone's National Development Framework Known as the Big Five Game Changers.** This period has been one of accelerated transformation, institutional strengthening, recovery from post-COVID operational setbacks, digital modernization, and extensive stakeholder engagement.

Introduction and Strategic Context

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, this report is in alignment with **Theme of the Congregation Address**, which constitutes the Government's core priorities for accelerated and inclusive development. These priorities - **Feed Salone (Food Security and Agriculture Transformation); Human Capital Development; Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship; Technology and Infrastructure; and Public Sector Architecture and Governance** - provide the strategic lens through

which the achievements of Njala University during the tenure under review are assessed.

Since assuming office in September 2022, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal has provided focused, reform-oriented leadership aimed at repositioning Njala University as a development-driven, research-led, and community-engaged institution. As Sierra Leone's premier agricultural and applied science university, Njala University occupies a unique position in advancing national priorities through education, research, innovation, and policy engagement. The period under review has therefore been characterized by deliberate alignment of institutional strategies with national development goals, particularly the Big Five Game Changers.

This report highlights the University's major achievements, reforms, and impacts across academic, research, governance, and outreach domains, with explicit reference to their contribution to the Big Five agenda.

1. Institutional Performance Key Indicators

Indicator	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend	Big Five Link
Total Students Enrolment	**8,032**	**8,707**	**18,404**	↑	Human Capital
Female Enrolment Ratio	**49%**	**50%**	**49%**	↑	Gender Equity
Annual Graduates	**3,508**	**3,518**	**4,166**	↑	Youth Employment
Youth Trained in Agricultural Technology	**400**	**400**	**478**	↑	Feed Salone
Courses Digitized	**150**	**250**	**586**	↑	Technology
Active Research Project Funds ('000 US $)	**2,883**	**2,985**	**3,698**	↑	Innovation

2. Contribution to Feed Salone: Agricultural Transformation and Food Security

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Njala University has played a central role in advancing the **Feed Salone** agenda, leveraging its historical mandate and comparative advantage in agriculture, natural resources, and rural development. From 2023-2025, Njala University in partnership with Traditional Leadership for Youth in Contract Farming accomplished 260 acres of mechanized rice cultivation in the Bolilands of Kamajei Chiefdom, and 110 acres of cultivable land in Njala Campus by the Department of Agricultural Engineering, amounting to 684 of bags (120 kg/bag Husked Rice) harvested from two farmlands and further distributed to other communities to ensure and guarantee food self-sufficiency; 100 acres of cashew seedlings planted by Mano Agricultural Youth Scheme under the leadership of the PC Haja Fatmata Binta Koroma Meama-Kajue; and Capacity building in adaptive rice breeding in strong collaboration between Njala University and the Chinese

Agricultural Expert Team at Kangahun, where the University Administration has leased 250 acres of land, and advancing towards the establishment of the University Rice Research Station.

2.1 Strengthening Agricultural Education and Training

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, during the period under review, the University strengthened its agricultural training programmes to emphasize **practical skills, mechanization, agribusiness, and climate-smart agriculture**. Curricula across agriculture-related faculties were reviewed to ensure relevance to national food systems, productivity challenges, and market demands. Such repositioning has enhanced graduate employability and reinforced agriculture as a viable and profitable enterprise.

2.2 Youth-Focused Mechanized Agriculture Initiatives

A flagship achievement has been the implementation of **youth mechanized agriculture and agribusiness training programmes**, delivered in partnership with government agencies and development partners. These initiatives trained 400 young people (men and women) under ENABLE NJALA (now transforming into Incubation Centre funded by AfDB) - in tractor operation, farm mechanization, post-harvest handling, and agribusiness management. Graduates were supported to transition into agricultural enterprises, cooperatives, and service provision models, directly contributing to food production, job creation, and rural livelihoods.

2.3 Research and Innovation for Food Systems

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, the University intensified applied research in crop science, livestock production, soil fertility, and sustainable land management. Research outputs during the period addressed productivity constraints faced by smallholder farmers and supported evidence-based interventions for food security. Through outreach and extension linkages, research findings were disseminated to farming communities, reinforcing Njala University's role as a national knowledge hub for agricultural transformation.

Collectively, these interventions position Njala University as a critical institutional pillar for the successful implementation of the Feed Salone initiative.

3. Advancing Human Capital Development

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Human Capital development (HCD) is at the core of Njala University's mission and directly supports the Big Five priority of **education, skills development, and national capacity building**. In 2024, the School of Community Health Sciences was transformed and redesignated as ***the College of Medical Sciences*** with three Schools: **Medicine, Nursing and Public Health.** Two are in full operation, and that of Medicine will become operational in February 2026.

Major steps have also been taken in partnerships with MAFS, FAO, TEC and USAID for the establishment of the School of Veterinary Medicine. The first crop of two-year Higher Diploma Para-Veterinary training has been accomplished. We are in consultation with the partners to operationalize the degree programme in Veterinary Medicine by March 2026.

3.1 Expanded Access to Higher Education

Over the reporting period, student enrolment increased across the University's campuses, reflecting improved access to higher education and growing public confidence in the institution. Academic programmes in science, agriculture, environmental studies, education, and technology continued to supply the country with skilled graduates required for national development.

3.2 Digital Transformation of Teaching and Learning

A major institutional achievement has been the advancement of **digital transformation in teaching, learning, and academic administration**. The University expanded the use of e-***learning platforms***, digital course materials, and blended learning approaches. These reforms enhanced resilience, widened access for non-traditional learners, and aligned Njala University with emerging global best practices in higher education delivery.

3.3 Academic Quality Assurance and Staff Development

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal prioritized academic quality assurance, staff capacity building, and mentorship. Investments in staff development, research skills, and pedagogical training strengthened instructional quality and research productivity. Attention was also given to gender equity and inclusiveness in staff development and student participation.

Through these measures, Njala University significantly contributed to strengthening Sierra Leone's human capital base in line with national priorities.

3.4 Staff Development

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University contributed to staff capacity building from its internally generated funds by offering tuition waiver to staff members and their wards together with communities' scholarships to deserving nominees for the three consecutive academic years, 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25. The total beneficiaries, in three consecutive years are 156, 176 and 278 valued at Le1,678,251, Le1,753,606 and Le1,821,470 respectively as investment in staff members, development for their spouses/children and communities' nominees as our corporate social responsibility.

Indicator	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Trend	Big Five Link
Staff Development	35	47	88	↑	Staff Capital Investment
Staff Welfare	68	87	116	↑	Spouses/Children Capital Investment
Communities Scholarship (Corporate Social Responsibility)	53	42	74	↑	Community Capital Investment
Grand Total	**156**	**176**	**278**		

4. Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship, and Skills Development

Youth empowerment and employment generation represent a critical national challenge addressed under the Big Five Game Changers. Njala University has responded through targeted academic and extra-academic interventions.

4.1 Employability-Oriented Education

Academic programmes were increasingly oriented toward **practical skills, entrepreneurship, and problem-solving**, ensuring that graduates are prepared for both wage employment and self-employment. Internship opportunities, field attachments, and community-based learning were strengthened to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

4.2 Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness Development

Through agribusiness incubation, short courses, and partnerships, the University supported youth entrepreneurship, particularly in agriculture and allied sectors. Graduates and trainees were encouraged to establish small and medium-scale enterprises, contributing to local economic development and reducing youth unemployment.

These initiatives directly align with the Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship pillar of the Big Five agenda. We invite the Minister of Youth Employment for partner with Njala University in the affordable training clusters with the training Centres available at our Incubation Centre.

5. Technology, Infrastructure, and Institutional Governance

5.1 ICT and Learning Infrastructure

In support of the **Technology and Infrastructure** priority, Njala University invested in ICT infrastructure to support digital learning, research, and administration. Improved connectivity and digital systems enhanced institutional efficiency and academic delivery.

5.2 Institutional Reforms and Governance

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal led reforms aimed at strengthening **institutional governance, accountability, and strategic planning**. Collaboration with government ministries, regulatory bodies, and development partners enhanced the University's alignment with national public sector architecture and policy objectives.

6. Conclusion and Strategic Outlook

During the period September 2022 to October 2025, Njala University, under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, made substantial contributions to Sierra Leone's **Big Five Game Changers**. The University reinforced its historic mandate in agricultural transformation, expanded human capital development, empowered youth through skills and entrepreneurship, embraced digital transformation, and strengthened institutional governance.

I extend my profound appreciation to the University Court for its unwavering support and guidance. I also honour the dedication of our Administrative and Academic staff, students, and community who continue to uphold Njala University's legacy as a Centre of excellence in teaching, research, and community service, innovation and industrial technology development.

Together, we have laid a solid foundation for a stronger, more resilient, and globally competitive Njala University.

Looking forward, Njala University remains committed to deepening its impact as a national development institution, supporting government priorities, and advancing sustainable, inclusive growth for Sierra Leone through education, research, and innovation.

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

Annex 1

TOTAL NUMBER OF GRADUAND FOR DECEMBER 2025 CONGREGATION

(Class of 2024/2025)

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES				
NO	**SCHOOLS**	**MALE**	**FEMALE**	**TOTAL**
1	SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SCIENCES	117	133	250
2	SCHOOL OF BASIC SCIENCES	30	9	39
3	SCHOOL OF BASIC EDUCATION	168	57	225
4	SCHOOL OF EDUCATION	165	198	363
5	SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES	24	19	43
6	SCHOOL OF MEDICINE	39	10	49
7	SCHOOL OF NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	23	13	36
8	SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWEFREY	27	63	90
9	SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH	130	151	281
10	SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND LAW	301	292	593
11	SCHOOL OF TECHNOLOGY	157	63	220
	TOTAL	**1,181**	**1,008**	**2,189**
DIPLOMAS AND CERTIFICATES				
	TOTAL	**448**	**544**	**992**
	GRAND TOTAL	**1, 629**	**1, 552**	**3,181**