



UNMIL/PIO/PR/110

Press release, 20 September 2006

**The United Nations Country Team meets with County Support Team in southeastern Liberia;
Deputy SRSR Ryan pledges UN support to revive Liberia county by county**

Harper, Liberia – The Deputy Special Representative for Recovery and Governance, Mr. Jordan Ryan, together with members of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), the Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs for Operations, Ms. Yah Kialian, a representative from an international NGO and other senior UNMIL officials, yesterday travelled to Harper, Maryland County, to meet with local government officials and residents. This visit provided an opportunity to discuss challenges and efforts underway to reconstruct the County, including through the new UN supported County Support Team (CST). The CST is a new UN mechanism established in the 15 counties to support of the county administration.



DSRSG Ryan addresses Maryland County authorities and residents

Maryland County Superintendent Mr. Sie Teba Neufville welcomed the delegation and expressed his gratitude for the support and concern shown for the people of the County. Mr. Neufville gave an overview of the challenges facing all clusters of the County, including security, education, health, public works and infrastructure, unemployment and the need to establish a banking system. He called on the CST to assist with the urgent needs of the County. “The CST has been working hard to alleviate some of these needs, but it should adopt a more aggressive approach in implementing its mandate, including in terms of supporting the rehabilitation of infrastructure and capacity-building,” he said.

In response, and addressing the more than 300 Maryland County residents in attendance at the City Hall in Harper, Mr. Ryan recognized the efforts being made by the people to rebuild the County. “Maryland is an example of what we hope to see happening throughout the country,” he said. Explaining the role of the UN, Mr. Ryan highlighted that while the UN will never have enough funds to address all Liberia’s needs, the UN will play a critical role providing technical assistance and as “the voice to the international community to tell them what the people in Maryland – and Liberia – are trying to do to come back; being more democratic, being more participatory and recognizing that the needs of the poorest must come first.” Mr. Ryan reiterated Maryland County’s need for more attention, both from the UN as well as NGOs, and vowed to bring this message back to Monrovia and to the international community.

Noting the joint effort made by UNMIL and all UN agencies, Mr. Ryan reassured that, under the leadership of the Liberian people and Government, “the entire UN has pledged to work together to help Liberia restore its national pride, its authority and come back as a nation.” DSRSG Ryan highlighted that the CST mechanism, now established in each County, will focus on three areas: to help fund the rehabilitation of infrastructure for County authorities; to provide capacity-building and training and finally, to help government gather and analyze information on the needs and priorities leading to the preparation of county development plans.

During the meeting, representatives from the Ministries of Labour, Gender, Commerce, Security, Education, Health and Justice also had an opportunity to highlight their needs and progress made to date. While in Harper, the delegation also undertook site visits around the city including the Martha Tubman Sports Stadium, the Administrative building, the port and the William V.S. Tubman College of Technology. UNCT members present at the meeting included representatives of UNICEF, UNHCR, UNHCHR, WHO and UNHS (Habitat). World Vision attended on behalf of the Monitoring and Steering Group of international NGOs in Liberia.

* * * * *