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The United Nations Country Team meets with the Rivercess County Support Team

Cestos, 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, Ms. Estelle Liberty, the Rivercess Senior Senator, Mr. Jonathan Ganney, a representative from an international NGO and other senior UNMIL officials, yesterday received a traditional welcome with songs and performances by the residents of Cestos City as the delegation visited their county for a day of meetings with the local authorities and residents.



DSRSG Ryan with Rivercess Superintendent and Senior Senator inspect the renovation work at the City Hall

This visit was aimed at discussing challenges and exchange ideas on ways to enhance reconstruction work in the county, including through the new UN supported County Support Team (CST). The CST is a new UN mechanism established in Liberia’s 15 counties to support of the county administration. Participants in the meeting were divided into four groups - basic infrastructure, capacity development/governance, basic social services and economic revitalization - to look at the challenges in each of these sectors and identify ways of resolving them.

Addressing the Rivercess County authorities and residents at Cestos High School, the only high school in the county, Mr. Ryan recognized the beauty of the county and the special warmth of its people. Mr. Ryan encouraged the residents to continue working towards rebuilding their county and reassured the support of the international community. Explaining the role of the United Nations, Mr. Ryan said that while the UN does not have enough funds to address all of Liberia’s needs, the organization “will continue to support your efforts by providing experts and convincing donors that they have to help – and that they have to help now.”

Mr. Ryan highlighted three areas covering the role of the CSTs: to help fund the rehabilitation of infrastructure; 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. He stressed that the overall goal of the UN is to work, under the leadership of the Liberian Government, to ensure that “all people in Liberia will come together to make sure that there will never be war again; only peace. And that peace will join with development so that the people of Liberia will have a much brighter future.”

Rivercess County Superintendent Mr. Francis Paye welcomed the delegation and expressed gratitude for the support and concern shown for the people of the county. Mr. Paye proudly spoke about the various ways that the county is slowly rebuilding, including the renovation of the City Hall and the ongoing discussions with telecommunications companies to provide better services in the area. He also gave an overview of the challenges, including education, health, public works and infrastructure, and expressed the need to build a bridge across the Cestos River, which would give access to hundreds of residents.

While in Cestos, the delegation also visited the City Hall which is currently being renovated through an innovative self-help project that can serve as a model for other community initiatives throughout Liberia. The team also visited the local hospital and the community radio station.

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