



UNMIL/PIO/PR/117

Press release, 11 October 2006

**UN Envoy challenges Liberia’s partners to “do development differently”**

**Monrovia, Liberia** – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, today urged government ministers, donors and the United Nations country team to consider doing development differently to ensure poor people have better access to resources and the power of choice. The UN Envoy was speaking at the launch of a two-day workshop in Monrovia aimed at developing strategic priorities for United Nations’ development assistance to Liberia.



SRSR Doss outlining the challenges to the UN System in Liberia

Outlining the need to measure how UN programmes translate into real change for poor people, SRSR Doss urged development stakeholders to “think about demand-driven development where poor people are asked what *they* really want, rather than continuing with the traditional style of supply-driven development programmes.” Pointing out the rapid spread of mobile phone technology to remote parts of Africa, Mr. Doss challenged the participants to think about the concept of “scratch-card development,” where purchasing power is given to the poor so that they can buy basic services according to their needs.

Another serious challenge for the UN and development partners is how to reduce the burden on government that results from too many ill-coordinated projects that use up rather than create national capacity, Mr. Doss added.

The Minister of Planning and Economic Affairs, Dr. Toga McIntosh, provided an overview of the government’s priorities and stressed that freedom from want and fear is the underpinning philosophy of Liberia’s new government. He reiterated the need to break with the past, improve donor assistance and effectiveness and urgently rebuild Liberia’s infrastructure to speed up the development process.



UN and Donor partners at the strategic prioritization workshop

Welcoming the participants to the workshop, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Jordan Ryan, called for an inclusive process that brings the UN family together. “Increased coherence through joint programming will allow the UN to respond to priority needs, including cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, youth and HIV/AIDS.” Mr. Ryan recalled the principles enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, especially the commitment to freedom, and urged the UN to do more to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

At the end of the two-day workshop organized by the UN Country Team, participants are expected to outline key priority areas and arrive at a common understanding of enhanced collaboration between the government and the UN family.

\*\*\*\*