



UNMIL/PIO/PR/67

Press release, 26 May 2006

**UN Envoy visits local authorities and community
leaders in Liberia's northern Nimba County**

Monrovia, Liberia – Special Representative of the Secretary-General Alan Doss and UNMIL Force Commander Lt-Gen. Chikadibia Obiakor yesterday visited Ganta, Nimba County, to meet with local authorities, community leaders and Bangladeshi peacekeepers, following recent unrest in Ganta city.



SRSG Doss visiting young women benefiting from tailoring classes provided by the Bangladeshi contingent

While in Ganta, Special Representative Doss separately met with County Superintendent Robert S. Kamei, Ganta City Mayoress Nohn Tensonnon, senior representatives of the Gio, Mano and Mandingo tribal communities, clan and town chiefs and the Land and Properties Disputes Resolution Committee. Each group briefed the delegation on their position *vis-à-vis* the land disputes among the three communities, emphasizing their collective desire to co-exist peacefully as they had done in the past.

Welcoming the opportunity to meet with representatives of the communities and the local authorities, SRSG Doss said he had not come to propose much less impose solutions, but to listen and learn about the problems. He urged the residents of Nimba County to work together and cooperate with the recently-appointed Presidential Commission to find a solution to the land-ownership problems in Ganta. “We must all work together to resolve problems left over from a long and brutal conflict,” the SRSG added.

“Nimba County is of strategic importance – it is the second most populated county, borders both Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire and is endowed with abundant natural resources. So, progress in Nimba County will mean progress for all of Liberia,” the SRSG said. He urged the local residents to build on the peace that has been achieved and move forward and not backwards.

SRSG Doss met with the troops and visited local youth benefiting from skills training classes provided by the Bangladeshi military in tailoring, computer skills, generator mechanics and first aid. He also visited Bangladeshi troops stationed in Sacleapea and Ethiopian troops stationed in Tappeta, Nimba County. In each of his meetings with UNMIL personnel he emphasized the UN’s zero tolerance policy for sexual abuse and exploitation and cautioned that any units found to be engaging in such practices could be sent home. The SRSG was accompanied by senior UNMIL military and civilian officials.
