



UNITED NATIONS

NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

6 June 2002

**DEPUTY SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE COMMISSIONS KONO DISTRICT
OFFICES AND INAUGURATES POLICE STATION IN KENEMA**

Freetown – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Governance and Stabilization in Sierra Leone, Mr. Alan Doss, yesterday commissioned the rehabilitated district offices in the eastern district of Kono and a police station in Blama, near the eastern town of Kenema.

The Kono district offices were rebuilt by recently disarmed ex-combatants with funds provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Commission for Social Action (NACSA).

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony in the diamond town of Koidu, Mr. Doss, who is also the Resident Representative of UNDP, said the project was “a concrete and tangible step” in national reconstruction. He said the restoration of Government authority in areas previously occupied by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) was “an important but first step in rebuilding communities; reconciliation is the next step along the road to a prosperous future.”

The Deputy Special Representative noted that the rehabilitation of the district offices was also a way of getting former fighters to work together. He reminded his audience that while the UN and the international community had invested substantial resources in the country, it was now the responsibility of Sierra Leoneans to cope with the challenges ahead.

In his speech, the Chairman of NACSA, Mr. Kanja Sesay, thanked UNDP for its assistance while stressing the importance of taking Government back to the people. He also expressed his Commission’s support for the construction of 1,000 houses in Koidu under the World Vision Shelter Programme, a project that is expected to start soon.

Later in the day, Mr. Doss and his entourage flew to the eastern town of Blama, just outside Kenema, to officiate at the opening of the local police station – the second to be rehabilitated in the eastern province after the Tankoro Police Station in Koidu. The Blama Police Station was also rehabilitated with funds from the Japanese Government through the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) Trust Fund. Ex-combatants provided labour,

with additional assistance coming from the Sierra Leone Police, the UN Civilian Police (CIVPOL), and the National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), as the implementing partners.

In his keynote address at the gathering, Mr. Doss said he was pleased that UNAMSIL was assisting in consolidating peace in Sierra Leone through the rehabilitation of police stations. He noted that the police have a vital role to play in society, stressing that UNAMSIL was “anxious to see the Sierra Leone Police re-established, reinforced and expanded in every district.”

He urged the people of Blama to work closely with the police, as law enforcement agents could not be expected to succeed without the cooperation of the people. “If you do not come together to overcome the past, the past will come back to overcome you,” he cautioned.

Reminding the audience that rebuilding the country will be done not by UNAMSIL but by the people of Sierra Leone, the Deputy Special Representative advised the police that they should “not come with a list of things you want [from UNAMSIL], but bring a list of things you have done for yourself and then we will help you.”

In his statement, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Keith Biddle, said the opening of the Blama Police Station was “a milestone” in redeveloping the police force after the war, adding that “our aim is to bring police and people together for peace and security.”

The Chief of UNAMSIL’s Civil Affairs Section, Mr. Ismael Diallo, and senior officials from the Government of Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, NACSA, UNDP and the Sierra Leone Police, as well as local chiefs and traditional leaders, witnessed the ceremonies.