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**DEPUTY FORCE COMMANDER VISITS MOYAMBA TO ASSESS READINESS
FOR ELECTIONS**

Freetown - The Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Maj. Gen. Martin Luther Agwai, yesterday visited the Nepalese Battalion (NEPBATT) serving with UNAMSIL in the district town of Moyamba to assess progress on preparations for 14 May elections.

Upon arrival in Moyamba, the Commanding Officer of NEPBATT, Lt. Col. Victor Rana, briefed the Deputy Force Commander on the deployment of his troops, pointing out that the situation in the area was calm and that peacekeepers were ready for the Tuesday ballot for presidential and parliamentary candidates. There will be more than 530 polling stations in the area to be manned by the Sierra Leone Police, as well as chiefdom and prison police. Distribution of election material in the district was expected to be completed by 11 May.

The Deputy Force Commander also met with local officials of the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and district polling officers who had just completed a training programme on elections offered by the NEC. They assured Maj. Gen. Agwai that preparations for the elections were moving smoothly.

In Rotifunk District, the Deputy Force Commander toured the Rotifunk Technical Education Centre where the German non-governmental organization, GTZ, is training 165 ex-combatants in carpentry, brick-laying, soap-making and metal works. He also met with local chiefs and elders led by Paramount Chief Charles Couker, who thanked UNAMSIL troops for bringing peace to the area and expressed satisfaction with arrangements made for the elections.

The Deputy Force Commander also visited Bonthe District and the town of Gbangbabatoke where he met with NEC officials and locals chiefs. Their discussions centred on preparations for the elections and the need to ensure that every eligible voter was given the opportunity to vote.