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**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MEETS WITH SIERRA LEONE
ELECTORAL OFFICIALS**

Freetown - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, yesterday met with senior officials from the National Electoral Commission (NEC) led by its Chairman, Mr. Walter Nicol, at the Headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to review the recently concluded presidential and parliamentary elections.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Adeniji congratulated the NEC chairman and his team for their success in conducting the 14 May elections, adding that “a standard has been established” that would be used to judge future elections in Sierra Leone. He informed them that UNAMSIL’s Electoral Section had carried out its own assessment of the elections and compiled a report on lessons learned and recommendations. These recommendations include an amendment of the statutory periods provided for in the law on electoral activities; an amendment of the Electoral Act 2002 to cater for the revision of the electoral register; and the reduction of the presidential election threshold from the current 55 percent.

The report also pointed out that future elections may not be able to attract the same level of support from the UN and the international community as was the case with the past elections. The SRSG urged the commissioners to start putting together strategies needed to meet the challenges of future elections.

The NEC Chairman thanked UNAMSIL for its contribution in support of the elections, describing the Mission’s mandate on elections as “adequate.” He informed the Special Representative that plans were underway to conduct the chiefdom elections to fill vacant seats as well as local government elections in the near future.

Mr. Nicol also said his Commission will in future provide adequate sensitization of the electorate in collaboration with local non-governmental organizations during the post-election period. He also indicated that part of the post-election activities would be capacity-building through training, exchange programmes and election monitoring.

Other officials who attended the meeting included Mr. Alpha Musa King, Western Area Electoral Commissioner, Mr. Fasalie Marah (Northern Province) and Mr. Francis Hindowa (Southern Province) as well as senior members of the Commission’s technical team.

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