

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

11 July 2002

SRSG VISITS SIERRA RUTILE COMPANY IN MOYAMBA

Freetown - The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, accompanied by the Acting Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Maj. Gen. Martin L. Agwai, and other senior UNAMSIL officials, yesterday visited the mining site of the Sierra Rutile Limited in the southern district of Moyamba.

The mine, located 135km southeast of the capital, Freetown, is the world's largest and richest rutile deposit where processed rutile, ilmenite and zircon were produced before war disrupted operations. At the height of its operations, the mine produced 25 percent of the world's production output and contributed about 60 percent of Sierra Leone's foreign exchange earnings. According to the site manager, Mr. Hadji Dabo, more than US\$150 million in investments is required to return operations to normal.

Upon arrival, mining officials led by Mr. Dabo took Ambassador Adeniji and his entourage on a guided tour of the company's area of operations in Imperi Chiefdom covering about 500 square kilometres. They visited the Lanti deposit plant where they were shown the dredge used to mine rutile. Later they toured other areas of mine operations in Yangatoke, Madina and Foinda where they were shown another dredge that was under construction by a Malaysian company. Construction work at Gangama dredge was abandoned in January 1995 when the area was attacked during the war.

The Special Representative also toured another plant site at Mobimbi where heavy-duty generators lie vandalized beyond service. The site manager showed the visitors Nitti Port where the rutile and bauxite are loaded shipped to Freetown for export. He later visited local communities and paid a courtesy call on Paramount Chief of Imperi Chiefdom, Ms. Hawa Kpanabom.