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(UNAMSIL)

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**VISITING GHANAIAN CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF PAYS COURTESY CALL ON  
SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE AND ACTING FORCE COMMANDER**

*Freetown* - The visiting Ghanaian Chief of Defense Staff, Lt. Gen. Seth Obeng, yesterday paid a courtesy call on the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, and the Acting Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Maj. Gen. Martin L. Agwai. The Defence Staff Chief is in the country to observe the work of the Ghanaian battalion serving with UNAMSIL and to attend a medal parade for the peacekeepers.

Receiving the visitor in his office at UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown, Ambassador Adeniji pointed out that visits like this were an indication of the importance that troop-contributing countries attach to the performance and well being of their troops in the Mission. He noted with satisfaction that the Ghanaian contingents have participated actively in the Sierra Leone peace process beginning with the Economic Community for West African Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) right up to the inception of UNAMSIL. He commended them for their high discipline and dedication to duty.

Ambassador Adeniji also pointed out that although peace has been restored and an elected government instituted, the status of the Mission would remain the same until September 2002 when the UN Security Council is expected to take a decision on its future.

In his response, Lt. Gen. Obeng commended the Special Representative for “leading one of the largest and most acclaimed successful UN peace missions in the world.” He advised against taking decisions or actions that would compromise this “hard-earned success” as has been the case in previous missions where abrupt withdrawals led to renewed hostilities. The Chief of Defence Staff expressed his pleasure with the support given to the Ghanaian contingent, which he said has made them “good ambassadors in the mission” and assured the Special Representative of the continued cooperation of the Ghana Armed Forces to UNAMSIL.

Lt. Gen. Obeng later paid a courtesy call on the Acting Force Commander who paid tribute to the Government and people of Ghana for their contribution to peace in Sierra Leone, particularly the Ghanaian role during the disarmament process and the May presidential and parliamentary elections.

The Chief of the Defence Staff and members of his delegation, which includes Col. Timothy Mbro Barnes; Director, International Peacekeeping Operations; Col. Owusu-Mensah,

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Director, Ordnance and Navy; and Capt. Osei Kwame, Director, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, are expected to attend a medal parade tomorrow for Ghanaian peacekeepers in the eastern town of Kenema.