

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

21 April 2002

UN DISARMAMENT ASSESSMENT MISSION VISITS
PORT LOKO AND BOMBALI DISTRICTS

Freetown – A United Nations assessment team currently visiting Sierra Leone to evaluate the effectiveness of the recently completed disarmament and demobilization programme traveled on Saturday, 20 April, to the northern towns of Port Loko and Makeni.

In Port Loko, the team, led by Lt. Gen. Mansfeld Eisele, a former Assistant Secretary-General in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, heard a briefing from Sector I Military Observers about the procedures adopted for disarmament of ex-combatants, the problems that were encountered and lessons learned.

The representative of the National Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR) also briefed the team on the reintegration projects carried out to support the ex-combatants within Port Loko and its environs.

Later, the assessment team flew to Makeni where they were briefed by peacekeepers of Nigerian Battalion (NIBATT) 11 and Military Observers. The team also met with representatives of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), CARITAS Makeni, a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Sierra Leone Police and Revolutionary United Front ex-combatants.

Welcoming the team, Lt. Col. Olukayode Keshinro, Commanding Officer of NIBATT 11, informed the team that peacekeepers disarmed ex-combatants under adequate security arrangements, including safe custody for weapons. The team viewed disabled guns at the weapons storage centre, where Gen. Eisele noted, "Now we can say we saw some weapons collected during the disarmament programme."

UNICEF and CARITAS Makeni representatives also conducted the team to their reintegration projects where some ex-combatants were witnessed learning new skills.

Other members of the team, whose assignment was mandated by the UN Security Council, include Maj. Gen. Henry Anyidoho, a representative of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and a former Deputy Force Commander in Rwanda, Dr. Leonard Kapungu, an independent expert, Mr. Nazir Kamal from the Department of Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Andreas Sugar from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Mr. Kristian Egge from the Permanent

MISSION OF NORWAY TO THE UN IS ALSO ACCOMPANYING THE ASSESSMENT TEAM AS AN OBSERVER. THE TEAM, WHICH WILL BE IN SIERRA LEONE UNTIL 28 APRIL, WILL ALSO VISIT GUINEA AND LIBERIA AS PART OF ITS MISSION.