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(UNAMSIL)

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CHIEF MILITARY OBSERVER TOURS KOINADUGU DISTRICT

Freetown - The Chief Military Observer (CMO) of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Maj. Gen. Syed Athar Ali, yesterday toured the towns of Kabala, Bandugu and Kamakwie in the northern district of Koinadugu to assess the post-election security situation in the area.

The leader of Team Site 11 of Military Observers stationed in Kabala, Lt. Col. Dim Zaharin, briefed the CMO upon his arrival in the town, pointing out that the security situation in his area of responsibility was calm. Military Observers continue to monitor the activities of people in the area, including, ex-combatants and non-governmental organizations. The team leader further explained that the re-integration of ex-combatants was proceeding smoothly with the assistance of 16 local and international NGOs operating in the district.

Lt. Col. Zaharin also informed the chief of military observers that about 200 Sierra Leoneans had returned from Guinea and resettled in the district. Following the briefing, Maj. Gen. Athar thanked Lt. Col. Zaharin and his team for their “excellent performance” during and after the elections, stressing that this was only possible because of good leadership.

The CMO then visited Mongo Chiefdom, where the Regent Chief, Mr. Brima Marah, who had organized a large welcoming crowd, met him. Mr. Marah commended UNAMSIL for its assistance in bringing peace to Sierra Leone and its role during elections. He informed the CMO that people were now returning and rebuilding their houses.

Addressing the gathering, the CMO lamented the fact that the country had gone through 10 years of war in which a lot of infrastructure was destroyed. He thanked all the NGOs that were helping Sierra Leoneans rebuild their country and urged them to work hard. He then presented the Regent Chief with 10 bags of rice seeds, 10 cartons of assorted food items and some school materials which were donated by Catholic Relief Services.

Later in the day, the CMO visited another team site in the town of Kamakwie where he received a similar briefing from Maj. Jorgen Leif Svane on the security situation in the area. He was informed that more than 120 ex-combatants in Kamakwie had registered for

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payment of demobilization allowances, while a number of NGOs were planning to set up offices in the town.