

**CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION, MR. MOMODU
KOROMA AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
DISARMAMENT, DEMOBILIZATION, REINTERATION
AND STABILITY IN AFRICA, CO-HOSTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE AND THE UNITED
NATIONS IN FREETOWN – 21ST – 23RD JUNE 2005**

**Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is not often that my colleagues and I have the chance to listen to such brilliant speakers as demonstrated during the past three days of active deliberations.

I should therefore like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Government and people of Sierra Leone to thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan and Professor Ibrahim Gambari formerly head of OSAA for successfully hosting this Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa in Sierra Leone. In the same vein let me thank my Co-chair, Dr. Namanga Ngongi (Former SRSG) of the Democratic Republic of Congo and a member of the

Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Africa for his brilliant stewardship of this meeting and his entire contribution towards making this meeting a success. This event will certainly leave fond and profound memories on the minds of the people of Sierra Leone and the participants from various African countries.

I have no doubt that the experiences shared and gained by the delegates would be documented and circulated as widely as possible, so that they could serve as a guide to the United Nations and African Governments in addressing future conflicts as well as the complex set of issues that characterize DDR Programmes and post-conflict countries.

Let us also don't forget that important as the DDR may be to conflict resolution, it is not an end in itself nor is it a panacea for ending all conflicts. It is just an important cog in the wheel of the peacemaking process. We must therefore be careful not to overload it with every other part of the peacemaking process. Hence we must urge all stakeholders especially Government and the International

Donor Community including the United Nations for greater commitment to the process itself and to ensure that the interlinkages between the DDR and other elements of a successful peace process and National Recovery are strengthened and sustained. It is in this regard that the Government of Sierra Leone in supporting the reforms of the United Nations put forward by the Secretary-General is putting particular emphasis on the setting up of a Peace building Commission. We believe that it represents a comprehensive strategy to address post-conflict issues. We should always remember that it is a lot easier for post conflict countries to revert to war than those countries that have not had or tasted one.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I conclude by thanking you all once again for your contributions at various times during the Conference, and the valuable insights you have given into the problems facing DDR Programmes in Africa today.

To the United Nations Task Force and members of the Planning Committee in Sierra Leone especially our abled Rapporteur, Dr. Francis Kaikai and the Conference Secretary, Mrs. Mieko Ikegame, I wish to say special thanks to you all for the time and energy devoted to the planning and successful organization of the entire programme.

I should also like to say how much my colleagues and I appreciate the time you have spent with us these few days in Sierra Leone. We wish you God's richest blessings and a safe journey back home.

Bon Voyage. I thank you for your attention.