

UNITED NATIONS



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UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

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**SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE BRIEFS DIPLOMATIC CORPS ON WAY
AHEAD FOR UNAMSIL**

Freetown – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, yesterday briefed members of the Diplomatic Corps on proposals the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has made regarding the future of the Mission. The proposals have been forwarded to UN Headquarters for consideration by Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his forthcoming 15th report to the Security Council on Sierra Leone, due to be presented in September. The Security Council has requested a detailed vision of the future role of the peace-keeping force.

Noting that the last report of the Secretary-General had emphasized UNAMSIL's view that elections should not be the yardstick for the exit of the UN from Sierra Leone, Ambassador Adeniji said the Mission had linked the continued stay of the peacekeepers with the attainment of certain benchmarks that would reinforce the recently restored peace. One benchmark was the ability of the Sierra Leone Police and Armed Forces to maintain security. A second was the successful re-integration of ex-combatants, and another, the security of the Mano River Union sub-region.

The Special Representative noted that the presence of UNAMSIL in the country was a guarantee of stability, allowing the Government of Sierra Leone to address urgent post-conflict demands. Included in the benchmarks, therefore, was progress in the consolidation of civil authority throughout the country. He expressed the hope that the Security Council would take these factors into account when taking a decision on UNAMSIL's future.

Present at the meeting were the ambassadors and high commissioners of the United Kingdom, China, Nigeria and Ghana, as well as representatives of the United States, Egypt, the Gambia and Guinea.

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