

## NATIONS UNIES

## UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE (UNAMSIL)

3 December 2003

Ref. No.: UNAMSIL/PIOR 052/2003

PRESS RELEASE

## UNAMSIL OFFICER-IN-CHARGE PARTICIPATES IN THE 10<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE NATIONAL RECOVERY COMMITTEE, COMMISSIONS MAGISTRATE COURT IN KONO

Freetown – The Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone, (UNAMSIL), Alan Doss, yesterday, participated in the 10th meeting of the National Recovery Committee (NRC) held at the district level in Kono, eastern Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone Minister of Development Mr. Mohammed Daramy chaired the meeting.

The Report of the District Recovery Committee (DRC) for Kono indicates that significant progress has been made in the past two years, including in the consolidation of state authority, reconstruction and rehabilitation of infrastructures, and highlights the challenges, in particular in the areas of economic recovery, roads rehabilitation and transportation.

Mr. Doss expressed satisfaction at the overall progress in the recovery process in the diamond-rich Kono District and emphasized its "strategic and economic importance". He also stressed that the Government of Sierra Leone should be prepared to assume full responsibilities for security and recovery, as UNAMSIL proceeds with its withdrawal from Sierra Leone. Representatives of the donor community, while renewing their support to the Government also urged it to assume "increased responsibilities for the development of the country, including through mobilization of domestic revenues".

As part of the programme of the NRC meeting, Mr. Doss officially handed over to Sierra Leone Chief Justice, Abdulai Timbo, the Magistrate Court building in Kono District. The building was rehabilitated with the support of UNAMSIL Trust Fund and furnished by the UN Development Programme (UNDP). Stressing the interdependence between the promotion of justice, peace and development, Mr. Doss said, "success in the extension of the judiciary will ultimately be measured by the extent to which the judiciary is accessible to all and effectively functioning". Having operational Magistrate courts in all the twelve districts of Sierra Leone is one of the benchmark set by the National Recovery Strategy for the end of 2003.

On his part, Mr. Timbo assured that the "Government will continue its efforts in the extension and consolidation of judicial coverage throughout the country". He further announced that the Magistrate in the eastern district of Kenema would also regularly cover Kono District until a Resident Magistrate is permanently assigned there.

UNAMSIL OIC and members of the NRC also visited various sites in Kono District, including the 9<sup>th</sup> Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) battalion deployed along Sierra Leone-Guinea border, the ongoing reconstruction of Police Headquarters and barracks in Motema town; diamond mining sites, the Government hospital and the youth center in Koidu town.

UNAMSIL and UNDP have supported the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Magistrate Court buildings in Makeni, Magburaka, Port Loko, Kambia, Lunsar, Moyamba, Pujehun, Kailahun, Kabala and Matru Jong. Furniture and some office equipment have also been provided to these and other courts throughout the country.

Senior Government officials and representatives of the British Department for International Development (DfID), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the European Union, as well as international and national non-governmental organisations operating in Sierra Leone also attended the NRC meeting in Kono.