



UNMIL/PIO/PR/43

Press release, 1 April 2006

**UN Envoy urges visiting Irish Government officials
to provide development assistance to Liberia**

Monrovia, Liberia – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alan Doss, Deputy Special Representative for Operations and Rule of Law, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa and other senior UNMIL officials, yesterday met a visiting delegation from the government of Ireland and urged them to provide assistance to Liberia, as the country enters a new phase in its recovery from conflict and violence.

Highlighting the recent political achievements in the country, Mr. Doss said “the successful election and inauguration of a new President set the stage for the new Government to push forward with its reform agenda.” He added that security remains the core concern for the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) “to allow the time and space for the Government to implement its programme of reform and to create an environment that will help attract foreign investment to Liberia.”

Mr. Conor Lenihan, Minister of State of Ireland with responsibility for Irish development aid, said the team traveled to Liberia as part of an assessment to identify countries where the Irish government could become more involved.

SRSR Doss expressed his appreciation to the Irish government for their continued assistance to UNMIL, particularly for the deployment of the Irish troops for the Quick Reaction Force (QRF), and expressed the hope that the Irish contingent would remain as part of the QRF. He also noted that Ireland itself was no stranger to conflict but that through investment in education and skills, infrastructure and entrepreneurship, it has transformed itself in a generation. He added that “Today, Ireland is one of the great success stories of contemporary Europe and Liberia can learn from that experience.”

During the meeting, other challenges faced by the Liberian government were also discussed, including issues related to security sector reform, enforcing the rule of law, strengthening the judicial system, public sector reform and the provision of basic services. The Irish delegation included Amb. Ronan Murphy, Director-General of Irish Aid, Ms. Pauline Conway, Africa Director of MOFA, Mr. Bob Patterson, 1st Secretary at the Irish Embassy in Liberia, Ms. Grainne O’Neill, Head of the Irish Aid Office in Freetown.
