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144 students graduate from UNMIL Bangladeshi contingent-sponsored Human Resources Development Project (HRD) in northeastern Liberia

Nimba County, Liberia – The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Operations and Rule of Law, Mr. Luiz Carlos da Costa, together with Nimba County Senator Adolphus Saye Dolo, Education Minister Mr. Joseph Korto, Agricultural Minister Dr. Chris Toe and a delegation from the Chinese Embassy, yesterday traveled to Ganta, Nimba County, to attend the closing ceremony of the Human Resources Development Project (HRD). The six-week HRD project, organized by the UNMIL Bangladeshi Contingent, offered training opportunities for 200 students in the areas of tailoring, generator mechanics, first aid and computer operations.



DSRSG da Costa awards certificate to students at the HRD closing ceremony

Speaking to hundreds of Nimba County residents, students, and the local authorities that attended the ceremony, DSRSG da Costa thanked the Bangladeshi contingent for the role they continue to play towards consolidating the peace process in Liberia. “I commend the contingent for going beyond their mandate of peacekeeping by engaging themselves in humanitarian activities,” he said. Mr. da Costa also recognized the importance of the areas focused on by this project and said “this core trained group can multiply skills and capacities by serving as trainers themselves within their communities.”

Touching on the recent incidents in Ganta related to land and property disputes, Mr. da Costa reminded that peace was an indispensable prerequisite for development. “We all need to collectively put all our focus and energy to achieve peace and harmony by overcoming historical mistrusts and divides,” he said, assuring of UNMIL’s continued support towards these efforts.

The Bangladeshi Contingent Commander, Lt. Col. Md Abdul Hoque, welcomed the delegation and lauded the achievement of the 144 graduates. “We have high hopes for you. It is now your responsibility to ensure that you use these newly acquired skills to open new opportunities for your future,” he advised the new graduates.

During their remarks, the representatives of the Government of Liberia thanked the United Nations for its assistance in getting the youth out of the streets and back into classrooms. “The most important assets of a country are the citizens and the skills they have; skills that will sustain the stability of the country,” the Minister of Agriculture maintained. He further urged the graduates to “use these skills to improve yourself and the communities you live in.” To underline the Government’s commitment to support such initiatives, the Minister of Education pledged 25 computers in order for these programmes to continue.

Students representing each area of study expressed their gratitude to the Bangladeshi contingent “for the knowledge they instilled in us and for the support they showed throughout the programme.” They called on the Government officials to provide scholarships and extend these opportunities to other students and those less fortunate.

At the closing of the ceremony, the delegation presented certificates to 144 students who had successfully completed the programme. The HRD was held from 17 April to 6 May 2006.

During the trip, the delegation also visited the site of the Nimbanian Bangladeshi Friendship Agriculture Project (NIBAFAP), where the Bangladeshi contingent is supporting and encouraging agricultural activities by providing seeds and a tractor.

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