



## **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE CELEBRATED IN COTE D'IVOIRE**

Abidjan, 22 September 2005 – A big but exalting task awaits Côte d'Ivoire's politicians, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Pierre Schori, said here on Wednesday at a ceremony organised by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) to mark the International Day of Peace.

“They need to respond here and now to the legitimate question of the population: It is now three years after [the start of the Ivorian conflict]. What will tomorrow be like?,” he told the gathering of Ivorian state officials, foreign diplomats, UN officials and other personalities, adding that this question was also directed at the international community.

The International Day of Peace had a particular significance in Côte d'Ivoire given the phase the country was going through, Schori said. “It is being celebrated two days after the third anniversary of the outbreak of the Ivorian conflict, at a time when the air is full of uncertainty and the streets are full of Kalashnikovs,” he recalled.

### **No military solution**

Reaffirming the United Nations' determination to contribute, alongside the people of Côte d'Ivoire, to the restoration of peace in the country, Schori stressed that there could be no military solution to the conflict. «A military solution is neither viable nor possible,» he said, «nor could it be approved by the international community. »

« Any statements in favour of such an option are unacceptable and must be firmly condemned since they constitute a manifest obstruction of the normal evolution of the peace process, » Schori pointed out.

UNOCI is also on the lookout for any statements or articles inciting hatred, violence and xenophobia, and regularly reports on these to the Security Council's Sanctions Committee, Schori added. « We constantly remind the media of their responsibilities and the importance of their contributing to reducing tension and to the peace process, » he said.

Likewise, politicians must exercise restraint in word and deed and avoiding fuelling fire, he urged, stressing that: « The most urgent thing for them is to implement fully and immediately the good agreements reached and signed by all the protagonists. »



### **Reggae star appointed ONUCI messenger for peace**

Noting the importance of arts, culture and sports in the search for peace and reconciliation, the Special Representative announced that Alpha Blondy, an Ivorian reggae star of international renown, had been appointed an ONUCI messenger of peace. Accepting a certificate confirming his appointment, Blondy, whose real name is Seydou Koné, called on Côte d'Ivoire's politicians to come together to seek a solution to the country's crisis.

Wednesday's ceremony marked the launch, by ONUCI, of a month of peace that will end on 24 October 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Activities will include a peace concert and soccer match between the Ivorian national squad and a Rainbow team made up of footballers from various countries who are friends of Côte d'Ivoire.

« Sport, culture and art contribute to the improvement of the lives of individuals and communities and unify people above and beyond their specificities, » Schori said. « This is why UNOCI involves them in its permanent quest for peace. »





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