

## The United Nations and Sierra Leoneans celebrate 2006 International Day of Peace in rain and shine

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Despite the downpour in the capital city in the early hours of the day, the Government and People of Sierra Leone joined the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), to celebrate the International Day of Peace on Thursday, 21 September 2006. Officially observing the Day at the UNIOSIL headquarters at Hotel Mammy Yoko hotel in Aberdeen, Freetown, under the theme, "the ways the UN works for peace" Mr. Victor Angelo, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and UN Resident Coordinator, read the Secretary-General's Peace Day Message emphasizing the "pledge to do more, wherever we can make a difference, to bring about lasting peace".



A cross section of Cabinet Ministers and Senior Government Officials; Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps; Heads of UN Agencies and UN staff at large attended the official ceremony to commemorate the International Day of Peace held at the Headquarters of the United Nations Integrated Office at Mammy Yoko Hotel in Aberdeen, Freetown.

After the observance of a minute of silence in honor of the Day and ringing the hand-held peace bells by a young student of a Freetown school the Honorable Speaker of the House of Parliament and then Acting President, Justice Edmond Cowan, read the statement by the Sierra Leone President, His Excellency Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah in observance of the Day. The President's message reiterated Sierra Leone's resolve in strengthening the ideals of Peace in accordance with the UN General Assembly's proclamation: "Accordingly, Sierra Leone endorsed the UN General Assembly Resolution proclaiming the observance of the International Day of Peace devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples". The President in his message also described the Day as "a source of inspiration to intensify efforts to end all armed conflicts and threats of such conflicts".



The Speaker of the House of Parliament, Hon. Justice Edmond Cowan, Acting President at that time, and the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Victor Angelo, watch a martial art performance by the Mongolian Guard Force during the joint Government and United Nations celebration of the International Day of Peace on 21 September at UNIOSIL Headquarters in Freetown.

The Day's official programme wended up in bright sunshine at the forecourt of UNIOSIL's Mammy Yoko headquarters with a martial art performance by the Mongolian Military Guard Force for the Special Court of Sierra Leone, and skits by artists from the Freetong Players ensemble. Already before - during the torrential rains demonstrating the natural power of Sierra Leone's heavy rain season - students of the radio group "Voice of Children" entertained UN staff and their guests inside the UNIOSIL building.

In a parallel event at the National Stadium in Sierra Leone's capital Freetown a Youth Soccer Gala for Peace was jointly organ-

ized by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the United Nations for 10 combined teams from 20 secondary schools on a non-competitive basis (see separate report). The football festival was meant to convey the United Nations' ideal of sport as catalyst for peace and development to young people and eventually to the general population.

During the Peace Soccer Gala interactive postcards including a special version for children - produced by United Nations staff in Freetown, in collaboration with the United Nations' Department of Public Information - were distributed to highlight the UN's collective role in peace and motivating individuals to take a moment to reflect on and note their contributions. Out of 500 postcards members of the Sierra Leone United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) re-collected 435 with amazing personal views on how to maintain peace. These ideas and quotes will be posted on the UNIOSIL website and aired through UN Radio Sierra Leone.

In the southern provincial headquarter town of Bo, youth from secondary schools processed across the township to the Coronation Field, where the Chairman of the Bo District Council presided over a formal ceremony attended by government officials, traditional leaders, Local Council members and United Nations field staff. UNDP Transitional Support Team field officer, Christian Mani, read the Secretary-General's Peace Day message in Bo.



A march past of all Senior Secondary Schools in Bo, in observance of the International Day of Peace. The procession began from Methodist High School on Mission Road through Bojon Street, Fenton Road, Dambala Road and ended at the Coronation Field.



At the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL) headquarters at Mammy Yoko hotel in Aberdeen, performances by a students' group from Voice of Children formed part of the celebrations of the International Day of Peace on 21 September 2006.

The public at eastern provincial headquarters of Kenema, also celebrated by a march-past starting from the center of the town to the Eastern Polytechnic Great Hall, where the official commemoration took place. The Transitional Support Team field officer read the Peace Day message of the Secretary-General, and the Provincial Secretary East, read the message of the Resident Minister. The Sierra Leone Armed Forces, the Sierra Leone Police, prison officers, UNIOSIL staff and representatives of UN Agencies such as UNHCR, WFP, UNFPA, and UNICEF were among participants of the ceremony.