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PRESS RELEASE

**SRSG INAUGURATES MINI STADIUM IN KENEMA AND PAYS
CONDOLENCE VISIT TO SOUTHERN COMMAND IN KOIDU**

Freetown – The Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, yesterday inaugurated a mini stadium in Kenema, eastern Sierra Leone.

The stadium, which was rehabilitated at a cost of more than US\$12,000 by PAKBATT 9 is one of the Mission's Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). The main objective of implementing this project was to help create a recreational outdoor facility for youths in the area, provide a source of revenue for the incoming District Council for the development of the town and decent venue for public gatherings during national days of Sierra Leone.

In his address, Ambassador Mwakawago said he was delighted to go back to Kenema once more to inaugurate another project following that of the Maternity Ward of the hospital in that township some three weeks ago. He noted that the rehabilitation of the stadium, which started during the second week of March 2004 and completed well ahead of time, was done with funds provided by UNAMSIL Trust Fund through the facilitation of the Civil Affairs section. "The stadium is a meeting place for many people. If used wisely, it can provide a forum for conveying messages that will enhance the culture of the people and self esteem," he said.

The SRSG congratulated the Pakistani contingent, particularly PAKBATT engineers, for devoting their time, skills and energy to rehabilitate the stadium in such a short time. "Special care must be taken of the stadium and its facilities so that they will not be run down or vandalized. Let it be a place where healthy and fair competition take place and let it be a place of joy to all and sundry," he admonished the townspeople.

Youth and Sports minister, Dr. Denis Bright, noted that, "we cannot say enough thanks to UNAMSIL but we know that the legacies you're leaving behind are for generations to come". He stated that with the contributions which the Mission had been making to the people of Sierra Leone, "UNAMSIL is laying the foundation for sports to thrive," adding that if the Government was to consolidate peace, young people should be central to their efforts.

The Resident Minister East, Sahr Fillie Faboi and newly elected Chief Evans Gbemeh were also present during the ceremony.

Ambassador Mwakawago also visited Pakistani peacekeepers of the Southern Command in Koidu, also east of the country to formally sympathize with them for the tragic helicopter crash of 29 June 2004 in which 14 Pakistani officers and men as well as other nationals perished.

He told them, "I come not to open a wound but to express condolence to the contingent. It's your loss and our loss, but we can comfort ourselves on the fact that they were good people," He added that the Pakistani contingent was well known for discipline, professionalism and humanitarian gestures. "There is a job to be done and has to be done. I'm glad that you're doing this in spite of your loss. May Allah give you strength to bear your loss," he concluded.