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PRESS RELEASE

UNAMSIL SRSG visits Liberia to enhance UN Peacekeeping missions regional cooperation



Freetown Sierra Leone – The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, yesterday visited Liberia for the first time to underline the commitment of, and cooperation between, the UN peacekeeping missions in the West African sub-region in addressing cross-border, transnational issues.

Welcoming Mr. Mwakawago to Monrovia, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Coordinator of UN Operations in Liberia, Jacques Paul Klein, paid tribute to the assistance given by UNAMSIL to the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

“Without the enormous support of UNAMSIL in the early days – personnel, bridging equipment, the Nigerian battalion that we airlifted in, that became the base of the ECOMIL force – we would not be where we are today in this Mission,” he said. The visit of the UNAMSIL Special Representative was also an opportunity to continue consultations on a sub-regional approach to cross-border issues, Mr. Klein said.

Addressing journalists on his arrival, Mr. Mwakawago noted that the border between Liberia and Sierra Leone is carefully monitored by UN peacekeepers in both countries. “We are working very closely with UNMIL, with daily patrols by air and land, to ensure that nothing untoward takes place from either side,” he said in reply to a question on alleged smuggling of weapons to Sierra Leone by former warring factions in Liberia.

Mr. Mwakawago said his visit was primarily aimed at exchanging ideas to enhance harmonization and collaboration among the peacekeeping missions in the region and to learn about UNMIL’s ongoing disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration (DDRR) program.

Accompanied by UNAMSIL Force Commander Maj Gen Sajjad Akram, CIVPOL Commissioner Hudson Benzu, Chief Civil Affairs Ismael Diallo, Chief DDR Desmond Molloy, Special Adviser Jayeola Lewu and Chief Public Information Kemal Saiki; during his one-day visit, the UNAMSIL

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chief and his delegation met with Special Representative Klein and senior UNMIL officials and visited the disarmament and cantonment sites in Tubmanburg. He also held a meeting with the Chairman of the National Transitional Government of Liberia, C. Gyude Bryant.

Giving a parting message to the Liberian people, Mr. Mwakawago said, “The international community is behind you, but that good will cannot be there forever. While it is there, use it to develop your country.”

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