

**UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)**

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PRESS RELEASE

SRSG AND DSRG PARTICIPATE IN 8th DEPAC MEETING

Freetown – The Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (SRSG) in Sierra Leone, ambassador Daudi Ngelatwa Mwakawago and the Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary General (DSRSG), Mr. Alan Doss who will be departing shortly for La Cote d'Ivoire, today participated at the closing ceremony of the eighth meeting of the Sierra Leone Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) at the Mamba Point, Wilberforce, west of the capital Freetown.

At the opening session yesterday, ambassador Mwakawago said the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) had been extended to another fifteen months wherein a follow-up mission would start operation in January unto June 2005. He stated that the transference of the security primacy to the Sierra Leone government was one of the benchmarks of the Security Council and it is a way of transferring primary responsibilities to local authorities.

The SRSG noted that the Security Council had a lot of interest in what was happening in Sierra Leone and informed the audience about the arrival of a Security Council team later this month.

Mr. Alan Doss, the DSRSG who doubles as the UNDP Resident Representative in Sierra Leone, congratulated those involved in the conduct of the May 22 Local Government elections which he described as peaceful and successful, adding that it was a milestone in achieving the decentralization process.

In his opening statement, Vice President Solomon Berewa said he was pleased to welcome ambassador Mwakawago who “has maintained very keen interest in the working of DEPAC as indeed in other development activities in this country.” He acknowledged that, “as UNAMSIL forces are reduced and reorganized, the responsibility for security is being progressively handed over to the Government security agencies.”

Today's session started with the meeting of the “High Level Steering Committee” chaired by Finance Minister, Joseph Bandabla Dauda, followed by a presentation by Prof. Sidi Alghali, Director of the National AIDS Secretariat, on the progress made in addressing HIV/AIDS related issues in Sierra Leone. Another paper based on the progress made towards the finalization of the PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper) as well as next steps to be taken was presented. The next DEPAC meeting will take place in August.

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