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PRESS RELEASE

**ACTING SRSG COMMISSIONS AND HANDS OVER
HOME ECONOMICS CENTRE IN PORT LOKO**

Freetown- The Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Alan Doss, today commissioned and handed over to the Ministry of Education a five-classroom Home Economics Centre in Port Loko, northern Sierra Leone. The Centre, which was built by Nigerian Battalion (NIBATT) 16, will accommodate about 600 children from ten schools in that district.

Mr. Alan Doss expressed his appreciation to the Nigerian contingent for the remarkable contribution they had made to the return to peace in Sierra Leone, mentioning the commitment of the peacekeepers and of President Obasanjo to stability in the sub-region. He indicated that UNAMSIL peacekeepers were also peacebuilders and congratulated NIBATT 16 for contributing to build Sierra Leone's future by responding to the priorities set by the Port Loko authorities in the national recovery process. "You can't keep the peace without stability; there can be no stability without employment; and without skills there will be no employment". He expressed the hope that the centre will turn young Sierra Leoneans from "job seekers to job providers".

The OIC UNAMSIL called on the Port Loko community and authorities to maintain the building. Noting that "UNAMSIL will not be in Sierra Leone forever", he urged the Ministry of Education to make the necessary arrangements for the center to be "adequately staffed". "The centre will give the youth the opportunity to learn a trade", he said.

Earlier, NIBATT 16's Commanding Officer, Lt-Col Abdul Sani Mustapha, disclosed that before embarking on the project they had consulted UNAMSIL Child Protection Unit and the Ministry of Education. The Commanding Officer of the Nigerian contingent in Sierra Leone, Brig. Nuhu Bamalli, expressed the hope that graduates from the centre would provide jobs for themselves and impart what they will learn to others.

The Deputy Minister of Education, Martin Sama Banya, expressed satisfaction, saying the construction of the centre was another "demonstration of good relationship between

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Sierra Leone and Nigeria. “We owe a lot to our brother Nigeria,” he said, adding, “The centre will be a landmark.”

Highlights of the occasion included the unveiling of the inaugural plaque; the display of local foodstuffs and crafts; and the handing over of the keys to the Director of the centre.

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