

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

PRESS RELEASE

Ref No UNAMSIL/PIO/PR264 /2005

UNAMSIL AND UNICEF HOLD CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON DRAFT POLICY FOR SUPPORT TO VICTIMS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE (SEA)

Freetown, Sierra Leone—15th September 2005,-- A one-day Consultative Meeting on the Draft Policy for Support to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) organized by UNAMSIL in collaboration with UNICEF took place yesterday at the UNAMSIL Headquarters in Freetown.

Declaring the meeting open, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, posed a number of questions to which he urged participants at the meeting to proffer realistic solutions. He cautioned them to avoid sentiments in discussing the draft policy but study it carefully to be able to come out with realistic solutions.

Ambassador Mwakawago also counseled participants not to be too enthusiastic to design a policy that may be oblivious of the element of due process, but rather ensure that the UN concept of “due process” is strictly applied so that even perpetrators will have the opportunity to defend themselves.

Speaking earlier, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General, and UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Victor Angelo, disclosed that the Consultative meeting on the Draft Policy for Support to Victims of SEA, which specifically targets humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel, was at the instance of the Undersecretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. He expressed delight that Sierra Leone was one of eight countries in the world selected for the pilot study on the draft.

Also speaking, the UNICEF coordinator for Sierra Leone stated that, taking the problem of SEA very seriously was the strong commitment of the current UN Secretary General, and the draft policy was a very much needed step if Zero Tolerance for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse is to be taken seriously.

He stated further that the draft policy posed a number of both courageous and therefore very challenging starting points which include providing assistance and support to victims of SEA as a UN responsibility. In addition the assistance for the victim should be considered within the overall assistance provided in the country for every single victim of SEA.

The Meeting drew participants from all UN agencies and international as well as local non governmental organizations (NGOs).