

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN SIERRA LEONE
(UNAMSIL)

07 November 2003

PRESS RELEASE

OIC UNAMSIL CO-CHAIRS THE 5th PARTNERSHIP MEETING



Freetown- The Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Mr. Alan Doss, yesterday joined the Vice-President, Honorable Solomon Berewa at the 5th meeting of the bi-monthly Sierra Leone Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC), which this time focused on the security framework, the justice sector, the recovery assessment, NGO issues and the poverty reduction strategy (PRSP).

The meeting was attended by, among others, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Justice, Development, Finance, Tourism, the Inspector General of Sierra Leone Police (SLP), Deputy Minister of Defence, Chief Justice and the National Security Coordinator as well as representatives from IMATT, China, France, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, UK, EU, US and the World Bank.

In his opening remarks, the Vice-President pointed out that “with great support from partners, the Government had taken important steps forward since the Consultative Group meeting a year ago, both in terms of recovery and longer term efforts”.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Banda Thomas, briefed the meeting on the security sector’s overall strategy, including measures needed to strengthen the Armed Forces and the Sierra Leone Police so that they will be able to fully assume security responsibilities after the withdrawal of UNAMSIL. The meeting agreed that exceptional investments were needed to meet essential requirements, particularly mobility of the army and barracks for the police in outlying areas.

The Chief Justice, Dr. Abdulai Timbo informed the Committee on progress, challenges and the way forward in the justice sector. The Vice-President added that “without an effective judiciary,

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the country will never ensure the rule of law, respect for human rights, good governance and democracy. The Judiciary is indispensable for lasting peace and development of the country.” Mr. Doss pointed out that if the judiciary were adequately staffed, pre-trial delays would be reduced which, he said, would also “reduce prisons overload”.

Presenting the preliminary findings of an assessment of the national recovery process, Ms. Karen Moore, team leader stressed that “recovery had advanced significantly in rebuilding physical structures and maintained an enviable and critical level of security in which most people have gained confidence”.

On behalf of the Government, the Vice-President “thanked the NGOs for the extensive contributions that they bring to the country”. Mr. Doss stressed that “it is important to ensure that NGOs are operating effectively within an agreed framework”. He also stressed that “the PRSP is intended to be a stepping stone towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015”.

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