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**PRESS RELEASE**

**OIC UNAMSIL PARTICIPATES IN THE NRC MEETING IN KENEMA**



The OIC-UNAMSIL inspecting a court barrier in Tongo under construction by the Zambian Battalion.

*Freetown* – The Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Mr. Alan Doss, yesterday attended the 9<sup>th</sup> district-held National Recovery Committee (NRC) meeting, which this time took place in Kenema, Eastern Province and was chaired by Mr. Mohammed Daramy, Minister of Development and Economic Planning.

The meeting included NRC members from the Ministries of Works, Lands, Social Welfare, Energy and Power, Health, Education, National Commission for Social Action, the Resident Minister as well as USAID, EU, NGO and the UN country team. In addition to district-based line

ministries, the District Recovery Committee (DRC) members included civil society representatives, Paramount Chiefs and Members of the Parliament.

In his introduction, the DRC Chairman, Dr. T.F. Mansaray, drew the participants attention to the fact that meeting “was composed of the three major pillars of recovery, including the Government, donors and the local population and that the purpose of the meeting was to review progress, highlight challenges and agree on steps forward”. Although there had been progress in a number of areas, he emphasized that “the most urgent challenges in the district remain poor road conditions, including the lack of a ferry at Gendema, lack of latrines, safe drinking water and shelter, late delivery of agricultural inputs, uneven spread of social services, over centralization, illegal mining and unemployment of youth.

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**UNAMSIL Headquarters, Mammy Yoko, P. O. Box 5, Freetown, Sierra Leone**  
**Tel: 232-22-295-000 Fax: 232-22-295-189**

**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Chief PIS, Kemal Saiki, Tel. 232-22-295-583 mobile 076-692801 email: [saiki@un.org](mailto:saiki@un.org)

Editor: Rachel Eklou-Assogbavi, Tel. 232-22-295-814, mobile 076-627774 email: [eklou-assogbavi@un.org](mailto:eklou-assogbavi@un.org)

The Resident Minister for the Eastern Province, Mr. Sahr R. Fillie-Faboe stressed “mismanagement is often due to lack of control by the local communities”. To increase their control, he encouraged “all Paramount Chiefs to create democratically elected chiefdom committees in order to monitor the activities”. In terms of decentralization, Mr. Doss indicated that Kenema will have an elected District Council next year and stressed that “it comes with a price: responsibility”. Mr. Doss called on “everybody to be responsible and accountable as the future lies in your hands”.

While reminding the people that Sierra Leone has 11,400 km of roads to take care of with limited funds, Mr. Caizer Boima, the Minister of Works, indicated that the township road will be ready by the end of the year and stressed that “the Government has the Gendema Ferry at heart”. He asked the people “to take care of their roads” and commended UNAMSIL for helping the Ministry with the rehabilitation of roads.

Mr. Sandi Bockarie, Principal of Eastern Regional Polytechnic, informed the meeting about the creation of a “policing community partnership board that assist the police and report on anti-social matters”. The Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. Abbas Collier mentioned that EU had agreed to assist with addressing the issue of teachers’ quarters, Mr. Ibrahim Sesay, the Deputy Minister of Health pleaded to the people to “go for prevention and use condoms” in order to avoid the spread of HIV/AIDS and Mr. Bobson Sesay and the Minister of Lands called on the people to preserve the forest.

Mr. Doss indicated that “the meeting was one of the liveliest held so far and congratulated the DRC for their excellent report and frank statements, stressing that a vibrant democracy is best built on people speaking their minds”.

NRC/DRC members also visited sites in Tongo Fields, the Kenema Township and on the road to the Gendema Ferry. In Tongo Field, Mr. Doss, together with the Minister of Lands, Mr. Bobson Sesay and the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources, Mr. Morlay Bai Kamara, visited the mining tailings, the former hospital of the National Diamond Mining Company (NDMC) and a Court Barrie rehabilitated by UNAMSIL in the Lower Bambara chiefdom.

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