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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Sierra Leone Holds 12<sup>th</sup> Development Partnership Committee Meeting**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone---* 08 September 2005, The 12<sup>th</sup> Sierra Leone Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) meeting takes place today at the Country Lodge, Hill Station Freetown. The meeting is co-chaired by the Vice President, Mr. Solomon Berewa, UNDP Resident Coordinator who is also the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sierra Leone, Mr. Victor Angelo, and the World Bank Country Manager, Mr. James Sackey.

In his opening statement, the Vice President, Solomon Berewa affirmed government's conviction in addressing governance issues including the issue of corruption which is key to eradicating poverty in Sierra Leone. He stressed that government has placed a lot of emphasis on having systems in place which will promote transparency and good governance and make government more accountable.

The Vice President further stated that while awaiting a firm date for the Consultative Group (CG) meeting, the government has put in place mechanisms that will ensure the smooth implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). To this end, he stated, a national Technical Committee which was envisaged in the PRSP has now been set and it's operational with sub-committees such as governance, security, macroeconomic, private sector development as well as social and food security, to enhance its work.

Mr. Berewa explained that the objective of the meeting was for the Government and its Development Partners to put in place modalities for a more successful Consultative Meeting earlier scheduled for 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

Also speaking, the UNDP Resident Coordinator, Mr. Victor Angelo, called for judicious and speedy utilization of resources once they are disbursed. He expressed satisfaction at government's efforts to curb corruption in the country but noted that more efforts should be made to address the menace. In addition to actions taken to strengthen the Anti-Corruption Commission, he recommended other strategies relating to the role of parliament in fighting corruption and in particular, the empowerment of the Public

Accounts Committee and the strengthening of the Office of Accountant General as well as augmenting the capacity of the Auditor General's Office, while the Auditor General's Office should be better targeted and well planned to audit key government ministries and agencies.

Mr. Victor Angelo also stressed the need for gender mainstreaming in development initiatives noting that gender disparities remain a major challenge requiring urgent attention. He emphasized that without gender equality, accelerated development will continue to elude the country.

On his part the World Bank Country Manager, Mr. James Sackey, called for urgent attention to be given to the issue of youth unemployment which constitute a security threat to the peace and security of the country.

The meeting was also attended by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago.

Members of the DEPAC include United Nations Country Team, DFID-UK, the United States of America The European Union, The Federal Republic of Germany, the Chinese Government, the African Development Bank, The Swedish Development Cooperation, the Italian Government, Civil Society Representatives, National and International NGOs, Cabinet Ministers and Government representatives