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## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **SRSG HANDS OVER MINI-STADIUM IN KOIDU**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone, 29 November 2005*— A 400-seater mini stadium, estimated over \$54,000, has been today handed over to the authorities in Koidu town, eastern Sierra Leone, by the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, at an impressive ceremony attended by local authorities, a cross section of UNAMSIL leadership, members of the Sierra Leone police, school children and members of the populace.

The mini stadium has facilities such as eight-seater VIP external latrine, internal flush toilets and baths, a water well; storage tank and a water pump mechanisms. It is also strategically located in the centre of Koidu town and serves as the only venue for all major activities in the town such as sports, exhibition centre for agricultural shows, inter-religious crusades among others.

It could be recalled that in February 2003 Mr. Michael Douglass visited the country as ambassador in support of the peace in Sierra Leone, and went to the mining town of Koidu in Kono District to assess the challenges associated with the reintegration of youth in the country. He recognized the need to support the provision of recreational facilities for the youth, and as a result made a donation of \$54,000 for the construction of a mini stadium. But this amount later proved to be grossly inadequate for the project and the SRSG in his determination to see the successful implementation of the stadium authorized supplementary funds from UNAMSIL coffers.

At today's handing over ceremony, Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago said he was delighted to commission the stadium. He recalled that during his visit to the town in November 2004, he realized that the project needed a new push and that that was why he instructed the Engineering Section of UNAMSIL to step in. "As we admire the structure...it is my hope that men and women of goodwill will emulate this example," he stated.

Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago admonished the people of Kono, "As you can see there are other areas to add to make this complex more beautiful, it is up to you to do your own part." He reminded the gathering that though UNAMSIL would be leaving by the end of this year, that did not mean UN's involvement in Sierra Leone and told them about the follow-up mission.

The Chairperson for the occasion and chairman of the Koidu New Sembahun Town Council, Ms.

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Mary Musa, in her address said she could not express how grateful they were to UNAMSIL for all it had done for Kono district and Sierra Leone. She assured that they would make good use of the stadium.

Also speaking, Mr. Lawrence Saa Kaminty, who represented the Chairman of Kono District Council, stated that, “this stadium is not the first but one of several projects undertaken by UNAMSIL...this project is a special one because it was initiated by one man-Michael Douglass. Today we come to realize that UNAMSIL will be leaving. What does this mean to the people of Kono? It means that we have to take the challenge to build on what UNAMSIL has built.”

Other speakers at the occasion expressed profound gratitude to Mr. Michael Douglas and UNAMSIL for the laudable project which will not only serve the people of Koidu but the entire people of Kono district.

The ceremony was climaxed with the cutting of tape; handing over and tour of the facilities by the SRSG and entourage, local authorities and members of the public.