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(UNAMSIL)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **UN IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE FOR NATIONAL ARMY**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone – 27 September 2005* – The Wilberforce Army barracks suffered several years of neglect and the terrible impact of the war that left it filthy with rubbish and refuse in large amounts and no working latrines. These conditions have changed through the joint initiative of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to give dignity and to raise the morale of the officers and men and their families.

UNAMSIL's Force Commander, Major General Sajjad Akram, said he was delighted to assist in the improvements of the living conditions in the largest barracks in Sierra Leone. "The water supply system was woefully incapable of supporting over 8000 people." He said it was frightful to discover that children had to queue up as early as 4 A.M. to fetch water from only five functional taps.

The Wilberforce Barracks improvements were inaugurated by the President of Sierra Leone, His Excellency, Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah. In his statement, he expressed his appreciation to UNAMSIL and UNDP for designing the project, mobilising the resources and managing the work. He said that these improvements have contributed to meet "some serious and urgent socio-economic needs."

The Barracks Improvement Project included the completion of 15 water points with four taps each. The use of 3000 litre water tanks ensures that there is always an adequate supply of water for the barracks. The technical management and supervision of the Barracks Improvement Project was undertaken by Pakistani Engineers (PAKENGR), with the artisan and manual labour provided by the RSLAF. This project is an example of the continued transfer of skills by UNAMSIL to the Sierra Leone armed forces. The PAKENGR also renovated the Wilburforce Municipal School as part of their contribution to the armed forces.

These improvements are a model of a successful partnership and an example of cost effectiveness, according to the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone and UNDP Resident Coordinator, Mr. Victor Angelo, "This initiative has a major impact on the stability of the country, as it addresses the living conditions of those soldiers and their families that have a critical role to play in terms peace and security."

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UNAMSIL and UNDP both donated USD\$75,000 to improve the sanitary conditions in two army barracks, Murray Town and Wilberforce.

On behalf of the Pakistani Contingents, the Force Commander donated to the RSLAF, \$5000 worth of medicine, eight computers, a multi-purpose photocopier/colour printer, 34 sewing machines and 38 footballs to the RSLAF;

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