



**PRESS RELEASE:**

**UNAMSIL CELEBRATES ITS LAST INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE IN SIERRA LEONE**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone—21 September 2005:* Applause, cheers and ululations filled the UNAMSIL Headquarters during a skit by the *Voice of Children* (VOC) Project as part of the International Day of Peace (IDP) celebrations that UNAMSIL was celebrating for the last time in Sierra Leone.

In one part of the drama that was in local language, Krio, the group gave a message that children of Sierra Leone needed peace to study in the country and to get scholarships for further studies abroad. Another group, *Peace Links Youth Group*, performed two beautiful songs on peace--“Believe In Peace” and “Peace Fill De World”.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), Ambassador Daudi Mwakawago, read United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s message to the people of the world to nurture peace, that “Peace is the paramount United Nations mission.”

Mr. Annan’s message emphasized: “...It is time for combatants and political leaders to consider the destruction they are visiting on their people, and on their lands.”

He said 21<sup>st</sup> of September is meant to be a day to contemplate peace with a global cease-fire and called on all countries and all peoples to stop hostilities for the entire day and to observe a minute of silence at noon.

Following with his own speech, the SRSG called on the people of Sierra Leone to take charge of their country’s destiny and sustain peace as UNAMSIL is withdrawing and closing down in the next three months after helping to restore peace for six years.

The local theme this year, “Peacekeeping to Peacebuilding,” began with a Flag-raising ceremony and a joint March Pass led by the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) military band, and including the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and children from Voice of Children Project and was followed by the planting of trees and a cultural display.

Also attending were members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps, other dignitaries and local partners. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), Mr. Victor Angelo, and UNAMSIL’s Force Commander, Major General Sajjad Akhram who rang the peace bell as part of the commemorations.

The week's celebrations ended with a talent show of music and cultural dances from the staff and local cultural groups.

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