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PRESS RELEASE

DSRSG UNAMSIL JOINS THE PRESIDENT DURING HIS 4-DAY VISIT TO THE EAST



DSRSG Doss visits Koindu Police Station

Freetown- The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG), the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Mr. Alan Doss joined the President, His Excellency Dr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah during his 4-day visit to the Eastern Province.

The Vice-President, Honorable Solomon Berewa, Ministers of health, local government, development, information, mineral resources, gender, children and social welfare, internal affairs, foreign affairs, the Resident Minister, the NaCSA Commissioner, the Inspector-General, EU, US, DFID, WHO and UNAMSIL

representatives, Members of Parliament, Paramount Chiefs and members of the communities attended the various events during the President's first day of his visit to the East.

The President opened the Motema District Police Station in Kono district, which was rehabilitated with debt relief funds and police staff quarters, funded by UNDP. He visited the Koidu Holdings Company sites and opened the Kailahun District Hospital, which was reconstructed by the International Medical Corps through USAID funding. The President also briefly paid a visit to the border town of Koindu where NACSA and UNDP are constructing housing units for the Sierra Leone Police.

During the opening ceremony of Motema District Police Station, the President reassured all inhabitants in Kono that the police station will “contribute to ensuring stability and protection in the district” and appealed to everybody that “open confrontation should be a matter of the past - from now on conflicts should be solved peacefully”. Referring to the Koidu Holdings Company, the President indicated that “the huge investments made in Kono will contribute to the social and economic development of not only Kono but the whole country”. If successful, he said, it will

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send signals to other companies to come and invest in Sierra Leone. He therefore encouraged everybody to support the company, particularly he Paramount Chiefs.

During the opening ceremony of the Kailahun hospital, the Paramount Chief, Mr. Mohammed Sama expressed appreciation to the Government and people of the United States for the great support to the district. He further indicated that “the district’s major concerns were the rehabilitation of the road network, supply of agricultural materials and improved learning conditions for teachers and students”. As a way forward, he appealed to the Government to allow the chiefs to do the verification of teachers in order to achieve reliable data on the number of teachers in the district, which was welcome by the Government. The President disclosed that a district health management team had been established comprising professionals, administrators, the local leadership and civil society to take care of the management of the hospital.

The Vice President introduced the Government’s new policy to encourage girl child education, indicating that “the Government will ensure that every girl child is given the opportunity to learn”. He stressed however that “the lack of school fees and early marriage have delayed girls education”. To fight this anomaly, the Government is giving out school materials and fees to all girls in secondary school in the country, which will be complemented by cash payment of a year school fees. In Kailahun, 312 girls will benefit from this policy and a symbolic presentation of these materials was given to six girls from Kailahun. The US Ambassador, Mr. Peter Cheavas, stressed that “Girls child education was one of the best ways to move the country forward”.

The US Ambassador also assured the people about his Government’s continued support for recovery in the district, stressing that the focus will shift to support for economic recovery and job creation. He said that “there was no reason for Sierra Leone to be poor as it is endowed with rich natural and human resources” and attributed the poverty to corruption. Mr. Cheavas also thanked UNAMSIL for its invaluable contribution to peace in the country and particularly in the East, but stressed that “as any good thing it will end one day”. The President acknowledged the effort of UNAMSIL.

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