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PRESS RELEASE

**DSRSG PARTICIPATES IN JOINT NATIONAL/DISTRICT RECOVERY
COMMITTEE MEETING IN MAGBURAKA**



Ministers of Development and State (North) and Alan Doss at the joint NRC/DRC meeting in Magburaka

Freetown – On 13 January, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), Mr. Alan Doss, attended the 12th joint National (NRC)/District Recovery Committee (DRC) meeting, which this time took place in Magburaka, Tonkolilli District, Northern Province.

The meeting, which was chaired by the Minister of Development, Mr. M.B. Daramy was considered “one of the most lively” and included representatives from the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, Education, Local Government, Youth and Sports, Fisheries, Works, Children, Gender & Social Welfare, National Commission for Social Action (NACSA) and National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (NCDDR), EU, World Bank, DFID, the UN country team and NGOs as well as community members, Paramount Chiefs (PC) and Members of Parliament.

The DRC Chairman, Mr. I.M Kamara, stressed that “the strategic areas for immediate intervention in the district included increased support for education, health, agriculture, roads and youth”. Concerning civil authority, both the DFID representative, Mr. Ian Stuart and Mr. Doss confirmed their support to the decentralization initiative underway. In addition, DFID indicated that “one of the focus areas of decentralization includes how to best help relations between local councils and the traditional rulers”. Mr. Doss emphasized the “need to build on and maintain the capacity created through DRCs as a way to transfer authority to the districts”. The DSRSG also informed that “the UN, together with partners, will continue to provide support during the transition from DRCs to District Councils” and encouraged “the Paramount Chiefs to be active in the development of the country as the Government can not do it all”.

In the area of rebuilding communities, the Minister of Health and Sanitation, Dr. Agnes Taylor-Lewis, stated that in Tonkolilli as elsewhere “children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating women and people over 65 will be provided with free drugs and treatment”. In terms of school fees, the Deputy Minister of Education, Mr. Sama Banya, informed parents that “no child in the classes 1-6 should pay a penny” and if they were asked to pay, they should inform the Inspector

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of Schools. The Executive Secretary of NCDDR, Mr. Francis Kai-Kai, who remembered the meetings held in Magburaka on disarmament, informed that NCDDR had completed its mandate, encouraged everybody to consolidate the peace and thanked the international community for its support, in particular UNAMSIL.

The Agriculture Director, Mr. S.M. Kallon, stressed that the district's land resources could contribute to the country's agricultural recovery, but called for increased material and technical input. The Paramount Chief of Kunike, Mr. B. K Kanagboro II, stressed the need for change and to stop "eating what we do not produce and producing what we do not consume". In addition, the NaCSA Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Justin Bangura indicated that US\$ 2 million had been set aside for micro-finance projects and the EU Representative, Mr. Jeremy Tunnacliffe informed that EU will provide US\$ 50 million in support for roads during the next five years.

Finally the WB Representative, Mr. James Sackey, stressed the need for increased local participation while moving from recovery to development and pointed out that "the joint NRC/DRC meetings were a most healthy way to do development".

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