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## **PRESS RELEASE**

Ref No UNAMSIL/PIO/PR/ 172/2004

3 September 2004

### **UNAMSIL HOSTS MEETING ON WEST AFRICAN INTER-MISSION COOPERATION**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone* – The Working Group on United Nations Inter-Mission Cooperation in West Africa, under the leadership of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), yesterday held a one-day meeting to discuss the current state of and future potential for further collaboration, and the legal, operational and political implications of resulting recommendations.

Civilian and military experts from the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), UNAMSIL and UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) attended the meeting.

In his opening remarks, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago said the meeting would focus on the need for United Nations peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, and UNOWA to cooperate closely on cross-border activities, sharing of assets, staff deployment and information sharing. He said the three missions had already been considering mechanisms that could be put in place to facilitate these initiatives.

Ambassador Mwakawago stated that the three countries were “conflict zones that lie side by side...” Therefore, it would be advantageous to exploit the synergy already created by that proximity. Potential areas for future cooperation included issues relating to military operations; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR); and law enforcement. Some of the proposals would “entail obtaining the consent of the concerned Governments, as the operations would impinge on the territorial integrity of a State outside a mission’s area of operation adjusting the mandates of the missions and seeking the consent of troop contributors” for their military operatives to be used in cross-border activities. Moreover, he cautioned participants to be flexible at implementing the resolutions.

The Working Group was established further to a recommendation by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his 19 March 2004 report to the Security Council on the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (S/2004/228).

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