



PRESS RELEASE

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SRSR HANDS OVER OILMILL AND SOAP FACTORY AT MOBAI

Freetown, Sierra Leone – The Special Representative of UN Secretary General (SRSR) for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago, yesterday formally handed over a rehabilitated 1, 596-acre palm oil plantation, oil mill and soap factory at Mobai in the Kailahun district, eastern Sierra Leone.

The Eastern Clinic Rural Development (ECRD) based in Mobai implemented the project, which was funded through the Human Security Fund of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) section of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

At the handover ceremony attended by two deputy Government ministers, traditional leaders, representatives from local NGOs, UNAMSIL, UNDP and local entrepreneurs, Ambassador Mwakawago congratulated “UNAMSIL DDR section and UNDP for the project designed to create job opportunities for the youth and generate income for about 550 direct beneficiaries,” adding that he was very impressed by the ECRD programme, which focused on an “integrated medico, agro-industrial self-reliance development, which creates abundant multiplier effects through food and sanitation needs of the people.”

The SRSR stated that UNAMSIL had relentlessly supported genuine endeavours of Sierra Leoneans and Government, particularly in the transition phase in order to mitigate the negative effects of the war. “As UNAMSIL draws down, it is fitting [that] such projects should be launched...the people of Sierra Leone have to stand on their feet,” he said, and urged residents of Mobai to take care of the assets, put them to good use and utilize their land as capital.

Dr. Bockarie M. Kobbah, founder and manager of the project, stated that “whether we like it or not, we [Sierra Leoneans] should now be on our own...We are practising the hard way.” He added that Sierra Leoneans needed to push their country forward and should not depend heavily on foreigners to do that for them. He said he was grateful to UNAMSIL and UNDP for not only providing financial contribution but also for the moral and management support given during the rehabilitation.

The Deputy Minister for Development and Economic Planning, Ibrahim Mohamed Sesay, noted that if Sierra Leoneans could engage in agriculture then “we can eat what we grow and grow what we eat.” He promised Government’s support to farmers and thanked UN agencies in Sierra Leone for their support.

Mr. Karim Sesay, Deputy Minister of Agriculture said that the Government was trying to encourage the private sector to invest in agriculture. “Now that the war is over we are trying to develop our infant industries,” he said.

The handover ceremony ended with the inspection of the project facilities by UNAMSIL SRSR and the attending officials.

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