



PRESS RELEASE

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SRSG VISITS UN MESSENGER OF PEACE PROJECT IN KONO

Freetown, Sierra Leone – Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sierra Leone (SRSG), Ambassador Daudi N. Mwakawago, today paid a working visit to the project site of a 400-pavilion mini-stadium in Koidu, in the eastern Kono District being constructed through a donation from prominent personality and United Nations Messenger of Peace, Michael Douglas.

The aim of the SRSG's visit was to view the project firsthand and discuss the way forward with community leaders and stakeholders.

Following his inspection of the project site, Ambassador Mwakawago expressed concern about the fact that the venture was behind schedule. He told community leaders that it should be completed, as failing to do so would negatively affect theirs and UNAMSIL's standing and be a major disappointment for the local youth. Community leaders should not engage, he said, in politicking, as this could hamper the construction and, ultimately, the completion of the stadium. He called for much greater transparency and accountability in the management of public funds and announced that he would be sending a team of engineers shortly to assess the project and submit a technical report to him.

Earlier, Chairperson of the Koidu New Sembehun Town Council, Mary Musa, in her welcome address, said residents were anxiously awaiting the project's completion and would make every effort to ensure that was done.

In February 2003, while Douglas was in Kono to film a documentary for the United Nations, which centered on the difficulties in reconciling child soldiers with their families, he decided to rehabilitate the football field in Koidu and develop it as a mini-stadium. He selected this project out of three that were presented to him by UNAMSIL staff after consultation with the townspeople.

Construction on the stadium began in January this year.

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