



PRESS RELEASE

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DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN FREETOWN

Freetown, Sierra Leone- The tenth meeting of the Sierra Leone Development Partnership Committee (DEPAC) took place Thursday 13 January 2005 at the Country Lodge in Freetown.

The main focus of the meeting which was co-chaired by the Vice President, Solomon Berewa and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG) for Sierra Leone, and United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) Resident Representative for Sierra Leone, Mr. Victor Angelo, was a review of the final draft of the Sierra Leone Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (SL- PRSP).

In his opening remarks at the meeting, the DSRSG, Mr. Victor Angelo expressed satisfaction at the fact that DEPAC is presenting its final draft of the PRSP which outlines the strategies that will guide the socio-economic development of this country in the coming three years, adding that, PRSP marks a turning point from relief and recovery efforts towards sustained development.

Mr. Angelo said he was glad to note that the document is a country owned strategy that was drafted in a participatory and inclusive manner and advised that it must therefore be treated seriously.

The pillars in the PRSP, the DSRSG stated, reflects that security, stabilization and good governance are foundation for sustained development, investment, economic growth and the provision of basic social services and ultimately human development.

He said the implementation of the PRSP is a participatory process in which Government, civil society and the private sector will have critical roles to play so that economic growth will be attained and poverty reduced.

Mr. Angelo called on the DEPAC and all participants to examine the draft document so as to ensure that the poverty situation in the country is reflected, appropriate policies and strategies formulated, and conditions for programme implementation clearly identified.

Earlier while welcoming the DSRSG to his first DEPAC meeting, the Vice President, Mr. Solomon Berewa, thanked Victor Angelo for his contribution for strengthening the document. He assured that, once the Boards of the World Bank and the IMF approve the PRSP, there will be the need to mobilize resources to implement the programmes identified in the document.

Mr. Solomon Berewa elucidated that, out of the 27 benchmarks adopted at the Consultative Group (CG) meeting held in Paris in November 2002, eighteen have been met; five are still on course ; while four are delayed. He however identified key issues which still need to be addressed and for which the co-operation of development partners is crucial. These issues, he said, include the need to have magistrates in every district and provide accommodation for them so as to further enhance the justice system in the country; the need to provide barracks accommodation for the army in order to remove the concealed security threat

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that the absence of such facility poses ; and the need to provide training for the youth and ensure that their youthful potentials are put in good and proper use.

The Vice President stated that Government is very conscious of the existence of UNAMSIL's drawdown plan, and in order to ensure that no security vacuum exists due to the implementation of that plan, a series of proactive measures have been embarked upon which include the Boarder Strengthening Initiative and joint Patrolling by the Sierra Leone Police (SLP) and the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), while a disaster management project to detect as well as prevent future crisis has been established at the Office of the National Security.

Participants were drawn from both the Government of Sierra Leone and the donor community.

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