



## **PRESS RELEASE**

Ref No UNAMSIL/PIO/PR234 /2005

Date: 14 June 2005

### **OSAA AND SIERRA LEONE GOVERNMENT TO HOLD JOINT CONFERENCE ON DDR AND STABILITY IN AFRICA**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone-* The United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and the government of Sierra Leone will from 21-23 June this year hold a conference on “Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration (DDR) and Stability In Africa” in Freetown. President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah is expected to present the opening address to be followed by messages from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a representative of the Africa Union and a representative of Civil Society.

The conference aims at reviewing the challenges of DDR programmes from an African stakeholder perspective and to articulate new approaches to improve the effective coordination and implementation of the process; to examine the extent to which current practices of DDR programmes genuinely lead to stability and development as well as identify the necessary preconditions for success and to help build a network of African DDR practitioners.

During the course of the confab, themes to be discussed will include lessons learnt from current and past African DDR experiences; analysis of current DDR policy and programme reform initiatives and creating an enabling environment for DDR. Other themes to be discussed are DDR, peace building and reconciliation; DDR and regional/international challenges; DDR and special needs and strengthening institutions and coordination for DDR challenges.

Participants will be drawn from government officials both policy and technical; ex-combatants and associated groups; members of the armed forces and different insurgent factions, as well as representatives of parties to peace accords and representatives of special needs groups and Civil Society.

It would be recalled that this to-be-held conference grew out of a ministerial Round Table Breakfast entitled: “Do Current Practices of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Lead to Stability and Development in Africa?” organized by OSAA during the ECOSOC High-Level Segment on 29 June 2004. This roundtable revealed the need to examine in greater depth the issues of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and stability in Africa.

The outcome of this three-day conference will be in the form of policy guidelines that highlight new approaches to DDR and provide innovative thinking on how to enhance DDR programmes in order to foster stability on the African continent. These guidelines will be disseminated to donors, governments, development practitioners, civil society organizations as well as international organizations and academia with an interest in DDR.