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(UNAMSIL)

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **UNAMSIL HUMAN RIGHTS LAUNCHES DISTRIBUTION OF TRC REPORT**

*Freetown, Sierra Leone, 9 August 2005* –The Human Rights Section of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), in collaboration with the Government of Sierra Leone, on Monday, launched the distribution and the sensitization programme of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report at the Miatta Conference Hall at Brookfields, west of the capital Freetown.

The report was first submitted to President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah on 5 October 2004 at State House in Freetown. But due to typographical errors in the draft it was not widely distributed and had to be taken back to the printers in Ghana.

UNAMSIL's Force Commander and Acting Head of Mission, Major General Sajjad Akram, said the launching "marks the successful implementation of a mandate that the United Nations consider crucial to the process of reconciliation and for laying a foundation for the people of this country to never again engage in those acts that brought this country to civil war". He however cautioned that "the distribution of the TRC report does not by itself bring about reconciliation and or prevent the people of this country from engaging in the same acts that brought about the conflict...It is just the beginning of a process of which mass sensitization and political will are crucial." He said the people of Sierra Leone must be fully sensitized on the report.

Mr. Benedict Sannoh, the Officer In Charge of UNAMSIL Human Rights Section, gave an overview of the report and noted that UNAMSIL, as far as practicable during its remaining life in the country and the follow-up mission within the confines of available resources, would assist Government in the dissemination and sensitization of the findings and recommendations of the report, and would forge ways and means to assist Government in the implementation of the recommendations advanced. He disclosed that his office had established

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dissemination structures in each district through local human rights committees, and that “the UNAMSIL Human Rights Section will produce a summarized version of the TRC report shortly which will also be translated into the major local languages to enhance further understanding of the report.”

Chairman of the TRC, Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, believed that with the support and assistance of UNAMSIL Human Rights Section in collaboration with Government, the report would not be stacked up or stored in shelves but be utilized by all peace loving people within and without. He noted that with the report Sierra Leone, “now has an opportunity to build a stable nation” that would create “a conducive atmosphere and environment for investors to come.” On behalf of the Commission, he thanked all partners for “enabling the Commission to be able to produce the four volumes of the TRC hardcover copies and two thousand CD- ROMS of the report.”

The Acting UNDP Resident Coordinator and head of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr. J. Seweka, said, “the report is to acknowledge what went wrong and what to do in the future” and that it was a success story between the UN and Government. He asked the government to pay great attention to the recommendations of the report, thanked donor countries that contributed towards the exercise and challenged the media to convey the message to the populace.

Sierra Leone’s Attorney General and Justice Minister, Frederick Carew, confirmed Government’s commitment to the implementation of the report, saying they were grateful to the UN and international community for coming to the country’s aid during the war. “We have delayed in establishing the Human Rights Commission because of the delay in the final TRC report...but now that the report is out we as a Government are commitment to the establishment of the Human Rights Commission. We need UNAMSIL Human Rights Section to provide us with technical assistance in setting it up,” he stated.

Highlight of the launching was the distribution of copies of the report simultaneously in other parts of the country.